

THE 2022 MOTORSPORT NEWS AWARDS

THE VOICE OF BRITISH MOTORSPORT

MOTORSPORT NEWS

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WE REVEAL THE BIG WINNERS IN OUR ANNUAL END-OF-SEASON SPECIAL, **STARTS P15**

Worst fears realised as World championship stays away from the UK for fourth season

IT'S "BAD FOR BRITAIN" FOLLOWING 2023 WRC CALENDAR REVEAL



No space for a UK WRC round

By Matt James

There will be no UK round of the World Rally Championship for a fourth season with the prospects of a home event in the future "bad" according to one Motorsport News source.

Last week's 2023 WRC calendar announcement by governing body the FIA confirmed the worst fears of British and Irish fans.

To add to their disappointment, two events that had become popular among spectators from this country and Ireland – Rally Spain and Belgium's Ypres Rally – have also been left off the next year's 13-event schedule.

While an event in Northern Ireland had offered some hope of a UK round, those plans appear to have been scuppered permanently due to funding issues.

"It's bad for Britain," a source told MN. "There appears to be no alternative to Northern Ireland and Northern Ireland was the only option. It's sad because there was a big history of the WRC in your country."

Full story, p9

THE VOICE OF BRITISH MOTORSPORT
MOTORSPORT NEWS

RETRO

GOING DOWN A BOMB IN MOTORSPORT

Jagermeister's famous racing heritage **p30**



INTERVIEW

WHAT'S NEXT FOR CRAIG BREEN IN THE WRC?

Why the Irishman is relishing a new challenge **p32**



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OEM Escort RS struts

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£10.50 £12.60
£19.80 £23.76
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£65.00 £78.00
£17.00 £20.40
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£128.00 £153.60
£130.00 £156.00
£69.50 £83.40
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£9.60 £11.52
£49.50 £59.40
£10.90 £13.08
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Oil line bulkhead grommet **£5.10** £6.12
Brake servo rod bellows **£5.20** £6.24

COMMENT

Photo: Motorsport Images, Jakob Ebrey



Our readers have hand-picked their favourite competitors from the season just gone

FANS FAVOURITES FROM A GREAT '22

It is fascinating to look back at the 2022 motorsport season. It has been a year of landmarks for so many reasons, and many of them have come in the national racing sphere. Those achievements have been highlighted in our second annual Motorsport News Awards.

Thanks to you, our readers, we have unearthed our National Racing Driver and National Rally Drivers of the year, while our panel of experts have selected the rest of the other six winners.

The results are really interesting, and we would like to pay tribute to all of our victors. Some of their efforts have been rewarded with a championship trophy, while some haven't. But what is common among them all is that they have gone above and beyond what was expected in 2022 and written their own headlines.

It is an honour to celebrate them all in this issue and whether you agree or disagree with our list of winners, we would love to hear from you. Please get in touch and tell us your views.

There is only one two-time winner of the MN awards – now in its second season – and that shows you that the accolades are hard to achieve. So huge congratulations go to each of our winners and we hope that you all get involved in 2023, when we will be looking for our next tranche of stand-out talents.

In this issue, we also trace the history of Jagermeister's sponsorship in motorsport with a great insight from our columnist-at-large David Addison. While fans of a certain vintage will recall a certain black-and-gold livery as their favourites, there is something alluring about the orange cars that battled their way on the tracks and stages for three decades. It is a very interesting tale and one that Addison has unpicked expertly

We also appeal to Craig Breen, a man on the edge. While his full-season dream with M-Sport in the World Rally Championship didn't bring him the glory he so craves, it has been another important staging post in his development as a driver. And, obviously, he picks out the positives from him switch to a part-time drive with Hyundai in 2023. Breen has suffered numerous setbacks in his career, and he responds to each one with a maturity and a determination that underpins everything he does and is about. We can only hope that his maiden WRC win is just around the corner, because surely there isn't a driver who deserves it more.

Matt James

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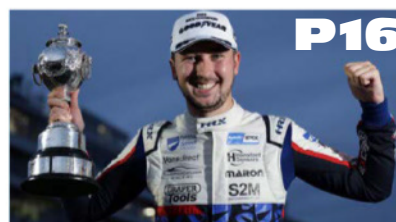
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Smiling Australian returns to his roots at Red Bull in a third driver role

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We look at the history of the
famous motorsport colours

What is the future
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We speak to the Irish star who is rejoining
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Driver column: Single-seater star Matthew Rees

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RACING NEWS



Ousted McLaren driver will swap to a reserve and development role



Australian raced for the team from 2014-2018

RICCIARDO'S RETURN TO RED BULL SEALED

Australian keeps hand in with Formula 1 test and development role at the title-winning Milton Keynes squad

By Matt James

Red Bull has officially confirmed that Daniel Ricciardo will rejoin the squad next term as its third driver.

The Australian, who was released by McLaren at the end of the grand prix year,

will take part in testing, simulator work and commercial activities. The 33-year-old, who is an eight-time grand prix winner, said that the chance to take on a less intense role in 2023 would give him the chance to figure out if he had the motivation and passion for a full-time return in 2024.

Ricciardo said: "I already have so many fond memories of my time here, but the welcome from Christian [Horner, Red Bull boss], Dr [Helmut] Marko [team advisor] and the entire team is something I'm sincerely appreciative of. For me personally, the ability to contribute to

and be surrounded by the best team in F1 is hugely appealing, whilst also giving me some time to recharge and refocus. I can't wait to be with the team and support with simulator work, testing sessions and commercial activities. Let's go!"

Horner said: "I know the whole factory is

excited to be welcoming him home. In his role as test and third driver, Daniel will give us the chance to diversify, assisting in the development of the car, aiding the team with his experience and knowledge of what it takes to succeed in F1."

FERRARI LOCK-OUT OF THE TOP SPOTS IN FINAL 2022 F1 TEST



Shwartzmann shone at Ferrari with the third best lap

Carlos Sainz, Charles Leclerc and young driver Robert Shwartzmann completed a clean sweep at the top of the timesheets as Formula 1 cars took to the track for the final time in 2022 in the Young Driver test in Abu Dhabi last week.

The teams were allowed one car for regular drivers completing test work for Pirelli (some crews split the lead car between two drivers), while the other machine had to be piloted by a younger driver or new signings with less mileage – ie: those that had taken part in fewer grand prix weekends.

F1 TESTING

Young Driver test Where: Yas Marina, Abu Dhabi When: November 22

POS	DRIVER	TEAM	TIME
1	Carlos Sainz	Ferrari	1m25.245s
2	Charles Leclerc	Ferrari	1m25.388s
3	Robert Shwartzmann	Ferrari	1m25.400s*
4	Pierre Gasly	Alpine	1m25.689s
5	Max Verstappen	Red Bull	1m25.845s
6	Alex Albon	Williams	1m25.969s
7	Logan Sargeant	Williams	1m26.063s
8	Nyck de Vries	AlphaTauri	1m26.111s
9	Lance Stroll	Aston Martin	1m26.263s
10	Liam Lawson	Red Bull	1m26.281s*
11	Jack Doohan	Alpine	1m26.281s*
12	Fernando Alonso	Aston Martin	1m26.312s

13 Sergio Perez (Red Bull) 1m26.333s;
14 Oscar Piastri (McLaren) 1m26.340s;
15 Felipe Drugovich (Aston Martin) 1m26.595s*
16 Valtteri Bottas (Alfa Romeo) 1m26.703s;
17 Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes) 1m26.720s;
18 Lando Norris (McLaren) 1m26.890s;
19 Nico Hulkenberg (Haas) 1m27.000s;
20 Yuki Tsuboda (AlphaTauri) 1m27.123s;
21 Pietro Fittipaldi (Haas) 1m27.172s*;
22 Frederick Vesti (Mercedes) 1m27.216s*;
23 George Russell (Mercedes) 1m27.240s;
24 Theo Pourchaire (Alfa Romeo) 1m27.591s*;
* = young driver

Leclerc ran for the first half of the nine-hours last Tuesday before handing over to Sainz, who eclipsed his team-mate's benchmark. Young driver Robert Shwartzmann took third position.

Fernando Alonso made his debut with Aston Martin and was 12th while Alpine new recruit

Pierre Gasly was fourth. Oscar Piastri ran with McLaren until his car was stopped with technical woe. Nico Hulkenberg's first run with Haas was also interrupted with a failure, although he was able to rejoin the session. Nyck de Vries was eighth on his first day with AlphaTauri.

BINOTTO FACES FURTHER PRESSURE AS THE AXE LOOMS

The Italian media has fuelled speculation that Mattia Binotto will resign from his post as F1 team principal at Ferrari and could step down by the end of this week.



There were reports around the Abu Dhabi GP weekend that Binotto was on the verge of the axe but no action has yet been taken. He has overseen an error-strewn season in which Charles Leclerc relinquished an early points lead and only secured second spot in the drivers' table at the final round. Despite that, Ferrari president John Elkann has given Binotto some tacit backing.

He told the Gazzetta dello Sport newspaper: "We have faith in Mattia Binotto and appreciate everything he and all our engineers have done, but there is no doubt that the work in Maranello, in the garage, on the pitwall and at the wheel needs to improve. We must continue to make progress and that goes for the mechanics, the engineers, the drivers and the entire management team, including the team principal. We have seen that there are still too many mistakes when it comes to reliability, driving and strategy. Putting our trust in Binotto and his team was the right decision. Thanks to them we are competitive gain. But I am not satisfied. We can do better."

Alfa Romeo team boss Frederic Vasseur has been tipped as a possible replacement for Binotto.

CHINESE GRAND PRIX UNDER THREAT AMID COVID DEMANDS

The 2023 Chinese Grand Prix, which is due to take place on April 16, is under threat because of the country's Covid regulations.

The Shanghai race was due to be the fourth round of the contest, but China has a zero-tolerance policy on Covid. F1 staff would not be allowed to be exempt

from quarantine requirements if they contracted Covid 19.

The last Chinese Grand Prix was held in 2019 before the global health pandemic struck.

It is not thought that the race would be replaced in the schedule and that would

mean that there would be a four-week gap in the calendar between the Australian Grand Prix on April 2 and the scheduled date for the Azerbaijan Grand Prix on April 30.

F1 bosses have asked chiefs of the Baku race to move its date forward, but this yet to be confirmed.



F1 might not visit China in 2023

LECLERC JUNIOR READY FOR FORMULA 2 MAIDEN SEASON

The brother of Ferrari Formula driver Charles Leclerc, Arthur, will step up to Formula 2 next season with the DAMS squad.

The 21-year-old raced in Formula 3 this season and finish sixth in the standings with one victory for the Prema Racing crew, his second year in the category.

He said: "[DAMS is] a very successful team that has achieved great results in the championship, and I hope I can be a part

of that and continue the team's success.

[Team boss] Charles Pic has done an amazing job to help the team back to winning ways throughout the season and I'm aiming to keep that going next year.

"We've a lot of work to do before the start of the new campaign in Bahrain in March, and I'm really looking forward to getting started."

Meanwhile, Clement Novalak has

switched from MP Motorsport to Trident for his season campaign in Formula 2. He finished 14th in 2022 with the team that claimed the title with Felipe Drugovich.

Reigning Formula 3 champion Victor Martins topped the times at the post-season F2 test at Yas Marina last week. The ART driver eclipsed the time set by Virtuosi driver Jack Doohan, who was sixth in the F2 standings this term.



Leclerc will step up from FIA F3

RACING NEWS

GB4 ACE WABERSKI STEPS UP TO GB3 WITH FORTEC

GB4 runner-up is described as “a driver to watch” for 2023 as he graduates on MSVR’s single-seater ladder to GB3

Photos: Greg Charman, Jakob Ebrey, GT Open



South African steps up in '23



Newcomer was a GB4 star

By Graham Keilloh

GB4 runner-up Jarrod Waberski will step up to race in the GB3 championship next year with Fortec Motorsport.

The 17-year-old South African secured a last-gasp deal to race in the inaugural GB4 junior single-seater championship with Kevin Mills Racing this year, only sitting in the car for the first time two days before the season start. Waberski nevertheless took four race wins in 2022 on the way to second place in the table, behind Fortec's Nikolas Taylor.

It was Waberski's first season of competition outside of South Africa. In 2021 he finished runner-up in his homeland's Formula 1600 championship, and he also won the South African karting title in 2018.

Waberski joins Max Esterson at

the team and has already had several winter testing days in the GB3 Tatuus MSV-022 car.

Waberski said: “[Fortec] have such a fantastic heritage in UK motorsport and have always had the will to win. So together I believe we can achieve something special in the 2023 GB3 championship.”

Fortec team manager Ollie Dutton added: “We were able to follow Jarrod's progress very closely this year, as he pushed us all the way for the GB4 title. That he was able to do so with little to no pre-season preparation was very impressive, in fact, he's already had more experience of GB3 machinery than he did with the GB4 car before this season.”

“From what we've seen so far, he's definitely going to be a driver to watch as he moves up with us next year.”

GB3'S ESTERSON SWITCHES TO FORTEC

GB3 race-winner Max Esterson has switched to Fortec Motorsport from Douglas Motorsport for his second season in the junior single-seater contest in 2023.

The 20-year-old American graduated from Formula Ford to slick and wings in GB3 this year, and sat as high as third in the table mid-season before slipping to seventh.

Esterson also has been

imperious in FF1600's blue-riband end-of-season events. In 2021 he won the Walter Hayes Trophy dominantly having finished second in the Formula Ford Festival. This year he added a Festival win, then was first home in the Hayes before a time penalty.

Esterson said: “It will be nice for the first time ever for me to be doing a second year in a series – and great to be doing

it with a team like Fortec who have such a tradition of success. I was fortunate to have tested a variety of cars at the end of the year and, while I had offers to head to Europe in 2023, I'm still early in my career and have a lot to learn.”

Fortec boss Ollie Dutton added: “Signing Max shows how determined we are to challenge for the GB3 title again in 2023.”

Young American is switching teams



Harvey looks to car future

UKC BOSS RECOMMENDS CHAMP

Ultimate Karting Championship coordinator Paul Phelan has said its newly crowned senior category champion Louis Harvey will be “highly valuable” to car racing teams.

Harvey, 18, is looking for a car-racing switch for 2023 and recently got a prize Scorpio GB4 test from winning UKC's Senior Rotax crown (see MN, November 24).

Phelan told Motorsport News: “Louis [won the title] by defeating the largest attended Senior grid in the country.”

“Having shown unbelievable

consistency and pure speed to take race wins, I believe Louis has the skillset to be a highly valuable asset to any race team.

“The round five event stands out. The final race saw a downpour mid race and Louis excelled with amazing kart control, never faltering once and took a dominant win on slick tyres. This same skill set was seen in the recent GB4 test.

“I'm sure there will be a number of teams in higher car formulae looking to add this very talented driver to their 2023 driver line-up.”



Osborne's (1) spell ends

OSBORNE TO END McLAREN STINT

GT ace Joe Osborne has announced that his five-year spell as a McLaren factory driver will finish at the end of this year.

The four-time British GT race winner came just three points shy of winning this year's GT Open title driving an Optimum Motorsport McLaren 720S alongside Nick Moss.

Osborne was the subject of a Motorsport News readers' Q&A earlier this year and said in his factory role he had: “done a bit of racing all around the world and help develop the 720 GT3 and now the Artura GT4 and I've loved every single second of it.”

Osborne wrote on social media regarding his McLaren departure: “We were close to extending the deal but unfortunately couldn't reach an agreement. Moving forwards I'm excited to be working back in more of a maverick style, and driving a range of different cars. I'm not saying goodbye to McLaren more of a see ya laters.”

BOSSSES SUPPORT GB4 CALENDAR TRIM FOR SECOND SEASON IN 2023

GB4 team chiefs have said the championship's bosses are correct to not retain its standalone season-opener round for the junior single-seater contest's second year in 2023.

The first-ever GB4 meeting, held earlier this year, was its own headline round at Snetterton, and was followed by seven meetings

at British GT or GB3 headline events. GB4's calendar for 2023 is largely identical except the standalone round is dropped.

Hillspeed boss Richard Ollerenshaw told Motorsport News: “The championship is an opportunity for drivers to enter single-seaters. It had one blip, [it] should have never consisted

of eight rounds in its first year, and it certainly should not have been launched with a standalone meeting as early as it did in the year. Everyone was starting from scratch. [Organiser] MSV are very proactive to looking at things, so much so that the championship has been reduced from eight events to seven.”

Fortec boss Ollie Dutton concurred. “The first round, standalone round, didn't need to be there and they've got rid of that,” he told MN. “But apart from that everyone's learning it and trying to figure it out but they've done a good job, so there's nothing really negative I can say about [GB4].”



GB4 started with own event

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RACING NEWS

Photos: James Robertson Photography, James Roberts, Dickon Siddall



Student contest made its bow in '22



Latham picks up trophy

MINI MAN STAYS WITH EXCELR8

Luca Marinoni Osborne is looking for podium finishes after confirming his return for a second Mini Challenge Trophy season in 2023 with frontrunner Excelr8 Motorsport.

The teenage karting graduate joined the team for his first full car-racing season in the Trophy this year. He took a top-10 finish in his debut meeting at Pembrey and finished 16th in the standings, the fourth rookie.

Marinoni Osborne said: "This year for me has been a huge learning curve. It's hard to put into words how much I've been able to learn from the team, and from working with Dan [Zelos, 2021 JCW champion], and the goal now is to push forwards and try to challenge for Graduate [class] wins and hopefully some [overall] podium finishes."



Marinoni Osborne back

STUDENT CHALLENGE GETS PRESTIGIOUS BRSCC AWARD

Student Motorsport boss Latham seeks entry growth in year two after getting John Nicol trophy

By Graham Keillon

Student Motorsport boss JPLatham is looking to 2023 with optimism after his new contest was awarded the British Racing and Sports Car Club's prestigious John Nicol Memorial Trophy.

The trophy is named in honour of former BRSCC chief executive

John Nicol and was presented by his widow Debs Nicol. It is awarded annually to the person or organisation the club feels has done the most to promote the furtherance of motorsport, and its winners include the BBC, Murray Walker, the Williams F1 team, Professor Sid Watkins, Damon Hill and Lewis Hamilton. The Student Motorsport

Challenge is an education-based inter-series within the popular CityCar Cup championship, and in its 2022 debut had seven university and college teams competing. Latham is aiming for 20 entries in 2023.

Motorsport UK CEO Hugh Chambers and BRSCC chairman Peter Daly both paid tribute to Student Motorsport Challenge on

stage at the club's annual awards.

Latham said: "A huge amount of time, effort, sacrifice and investment has been invested in Student Motorsport over many years, not just by myself but by the whole team."

"I truly believe that we are making a difference that will have a huge effect on the working lives of the students themselves and

the teams that they will work for.

"I was blown away with the kindness and sincerity of all that was said about the Student Motorsport Challenge on the evening and I am looking forward to continuing those conversations with Peter and Hugh soon."

"To be awarded the [trophy] has been the biggest highlight of my career to date."

BIG INTEREST IN AUDI CONTEST

British Racing and Sports Car Club bosses expect a vast turnout for its Audi TT Cup Racing series when it makes its debut next year.

The one-make Audi TT coupe contest is devised and developed by rollcage manufacturer and series developer SW Motorsports.

BRSCC chief operating officer Paul McErlean told Motorsport News: "In 21 days following the first public showing of it there's 29 donor cars been purchased – it's incredible – and 21 kits."

"I've been in the game a long time and I've only ever seen this probably twice before. This is the one that I expect to have the largest grid in my knowledge on the first-ever race."

"And there are some reputable teams that are

getting involved. There's a lot of owner-drivers that are looking at it and there's commercial teams that think that it's got the right combination for them to build customer programmes around.

"It's a combination of things [attracting people]. The car is proven robust, the engine has been in motorsport for many years. So there's no nervousness about the reliability of the car."

"If you say to someone when they look at the car, 'what do you think that car costs?' everyone's telling you £25,000-35,000, and it's £12,000 built."

"The other thing is unlike most cars the TT hasn't aesthetically evolved radically, so it looks very modern."

MGCC SHARES WITH EQUIPE FOR 2023

CALENDAR	
MGCC 2023	
DATE	VENUE/CIRCUIT
April 1-2	Brands Hatch Indy
May 13	Oulton Park
June 10-11	Silverstone Grand Prix Circuit
July 30	Cadwell Park
Sept 23-24	Snetterton 300



MGCC will run alongside Equipe for three of its five rounds

The MG Car Club has unveiled its race calendar for 2023 that has two standalone rounds plus three shared with Equipe Classic Racing.

Equipe's historic racing categories were a common feature at MGCC race meetings up until 2021, then for 2022 Equipe headlined its own meetings. MGCC – which started running race meetings in 1950 and today is close to unique as a single-marque club running UK race events – this year ran a six-meeting schedule. It was made up of single-day meetings aside from its MG Live two-day flagship on Silverstone's Grand Prix circuit. Filling its timetable became

harder for 2023 as MG Metro Cup left to join the British Racing and Sports Car Club's line-up.

MGCC next year will have standalone meetings at Oulton Park in May and Cadwell Park in July, and will appear at Equipe's two-day Brands Hatch and Snetterton events in April and September respectively. The clubs will collaborate for the Silverstone GP meeting.

A number of MG-related anniversaries will be reached in 2023: the MG marque celebrates 100 years, the MG Cup marks its 35th anniversary, the Midget and Sprite Club its 40th anniversary, plus it will be the 90th anniversary of the MG K3.



Audi TT coupe proving popular for new series

NEW SCOTTISH DISCOUNT PRIZES FOR TOP THREE

The Scottish Motor Racing Club has unveiled new prize entry and registration discounts worth over £13,000 for the top-three finishers in its main championships this season and in 2023.

In 2022's and 2023's Scottish Classic Sports and Saloons,

Scottish Citroen C1 Cup, Scottish Fiesta Championship and Scottish Mini Cooper Cup, each champion driver gets a 100% discount on their registration fee and race entry fees for the next season. Runners-up get a 50% discount on these

and third-place finishers get 25% off. They can use the discount in any SMRC championship.

The club introduced these prizes following member feedback, and backdated the fund to 2022 because of the cost of living crisis.

SMRC chairman Vic Covey Jr said: "Scotland has a long history of producing talented competitors and as a club, we want to do everything we can to support our up-and-coming drivers, particularly in the hard economic times we are facing."



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RALLY NEWS



Rally Chile last took place in the 2019 season

CALENDAR

WHERE TO WATCH INTERNATIONAL RALLYING IN 2023

DATE	EVENT	CHAMPIONSHIP
Jan 19-22	Monte Carlo Rally	WRC
Feb 9-12	Rally Sweden	WRC
Mar 10-12	Rally Serras de Fafe (Portugal)	ERC
Mar 16-19	Rally Mexico	WRC
Apr 20-23	Croatia Rally	WRC
May 4-6	Rally Islas Canarias	ERC
May 11-14	Rally of Portugal	WRC
May 19-21	Rally Poland	ERC
Jun 1-4	Rally Italy	WRC
Jun 16-18	Rally Uepaja (Latvia)	ERC
Jun 29-Jul 2	Safari Rally	WRC
Jul 6-8	Rally Royal of Scandinavia (Sweden)	ERC
Jul 20-23	Rally Estonia	WRC
Jul 28-30	Rally di Roma Capitale	ERC
Aug 3-6	Rally Finland	WRC
Aug 18-20	Rally Zlin (Czech Republic)	ERC
Sep 7-10	Acropolis Rally	WRC
Sep 28-Oct 1	Rally Chile	WRC
Oct 6-8	Rally Hungary	ERC
Oct 26-29	Central European Rally	WRC
Nov 16-19	Rally Japan	WRC

CENTRAL EUROPEAN RALLY: WHAT WE KNOW

Starting in Prague, the all-new Central European Rally is set to be based out of the German city of Passau in Bavaria.

A significantly expanded version of the 3-Stadte-Rallye, the event is a collaboration between the motorsport governing bodies in Austria, Czech Republic and Germany, which will all host Tarmac stages.

By utilising an

existing event as its basis, organisers have been able to secure a fast-tracked route into the WRC after October's edition was inspected by senior FIA officials, including Michele Mouton, the sport's safety boss.

While Germany was a once a WRC mainstay, Austria and Czech Republic have counted on the European championship for their international rallying fix.

FIVE AGAIN FOR JUNIOR WRC

The FIA Junior WRC Championship will consist of five rounds again in 2023, its second season using the Ford Fiesta Rally3 as its base car.

Events on asphalt, gravel and snow will give drivers experience on all surfaces with Rally Sweden, Croatia Rally, Rally Italy, Rally Estonia and Acropolis Rally making up the schedule.

Irishman William Creighton is planning to return to the championship in 2023, while Max McRae, Alister's son and grandson of Jimmy, is known to be working to secure backing to contest the one-make series for the first time.

Northern Irishman Jon Armstrong finished runner-up in the points in the 2022 competition.



Junior WRC drivers get a mixed line-up

EVENTS NEW AND OLD FOR WRC IN 2023 BUT UK MISSES OUT

Chile and Mexico return, new Central European Rally replaces Spanish round

By Matt James

Next year's World Rally Championship will be fought out over 13 events after plans for an expected 14th round were shelved.

While there had been speculation that Saudi Arabia would join the schedule as a fifth flyaway event, the calendar rubberstamped by the FIA World Motor Sport Council last week confirmed overseas rounds in Chile, Japan, Kenya and Mexico only.

However, the inclusion of Chile and Mexico brings the WRC back to South and North America respectively, with Chile returning for the first time since 2019. Mexico was the third

event of the 2020 season just as the Covid-19 pandemic took hold but hasn't featured since then.

Kenya rejoined the WRC in 2021, while Japan returned this year for the first time since 2010, albeit with a rally marred by stage cancellations and controversy after a member of the public drove onto a live stage.

FIA rally department chief Andrew Wheatley said: "It's fundamental for a World championship to reflect the global nature of motorsport. Covid caused us to be absent from some regions since 2020 but we're moving in the right direction with four long-haul events in 2023. We are coming closer to the vision of having the WRC

support our global regional rally series and, at the same time, highlighting the importance of events that have formed the backbone to the WRC for the first 50 years."

Although the FIA's vision of a more global calendar – that would essentially feature an equal split comfortably with motorsport bosses in the UK and Ireland who face an increasingly tough task to bring the WRC back to these shores given the limited calendar slots.

That challenge has increased with the emergence of the new Central

European Rally, which will feature Tarmac stages in Austria, Czech Republic and Germany, and is expected to be a long-term fixture on the calendar due to its reported Red Bull funding.

Meanwhile, organisers in Spain are understood to be working on a 2024 return after the Central European Rally took its place on the calendar.

An eight-round European Rally Championship for 2023 was also signed off last week. The new Royal Rally of Scandinavia – a summer version of the Rally Sweden when it ran in Varmland – is the only new addition and takes the place of the Azores Rallye.

MILLENER ADMITS TO TANAK AND LOEB WRC TALKS

M-Sport team boss Richard Millener has confirmed the Cumbrian outfit is in discussions with Ott Tanak for 2023 – but insisted the Estonian is one of several drivers it is currently talking to.

Motorsport News reported on speculation in October that Tanak would be returning to M-Sport for next season following his Hyundai exit with Craig Breen moving in the opposite direction. Breen's Hyundai

comeback was confirmed last month but Millener admitted he was in no rush to reveal M-Sport's 2023 driver line-up, adding that Sebastian Loeb could again form part of its plans.

"We've got time," Millener told WRC.com. "Entries for Monte close on December 16 – I'm confident we'll have news before then."

"It sounds like a cliché, but genuinely we are talking to everybody about next year. That includes [Tanak] and

Seb [Loeb]. We're confident we have a competitive car in the Puma and we know what we've got coming for next season."

"Working with Seb was one of the highlights of 2022 – like you can imagine, winning Monte was an exceptional way to start the new hybrid generation."

Millener also confirmed that Gus Greensmith and Pierre-Louis Loubet remain on its radar for 2023 having had "successful 2022 seasons with us".



Loeb is on M-Sport's radar for more 2023 rallies

MORE OF THE SAME WOULD SUIT BRITON GREENSMITH

Gus Greensmith (right) is keen on another full season with M-Sport having enjoyed his best World Rally Championship campaign so far in 2022.

The 25-year-old Briton scored his first WRC stage win on the Monte Carlo Rally and was fastest of all on the first of two visits to Rally New Zealand's iconic Whaanga Coast stage.

Although his progress was blighted by several



retirements and a car-wrecking crash in New Zealand, he finished in the top six three times and was 10th in the final standings.

"I would like to do a full season, that would be good," Greensmith said.

RALLY NEWS

ARMSTRONG LEADS THE FIELD AWAY ON GRIZEDALE RETURN

Packed-out event ready for a competitive return after enforced absence

Photos: Ben Lawrence



Scot Jock Armstrong will head the runners away

By Paul Lawrence

A top-quality entry will mark the return of the Grizedale Stages this weekend after a three-year absence.

The popular end of season Lake District event last run in 2019. In 2020 it was lost to the Covid pandemic and in 2021 the aftermath of Storm Arwen made it impossible for the event to run.

Now it is back with an excellent 90-car field for just four special stages in the Grizedale complex, starting on Friday evening with a return to Grizedale East for the first time since 1995. Saturday's action takes in two stages in Grizedale before they are then joined together to make a mammoth 19-mile finale in one of the UK most

challenging forest complexes.

Scottish ace Jack Armstrong will head the field away from Coniston in his Subaru Impreza but faces ferocious opposition in Elliot Payne, Garry Pearson, 2016 rally winner Stephen Petch, Peter Taylor, Russ Thompson and Arron Newby.

A strong Irish entry includes Niall McCullagh (Fiesta Rally2), Vivian Hamill and Brendan Cumiskey (Polo GTi R5s) and Darren Hamill in a Fiesta R5. Other notable entries include asphalt ace John Stone who is taking his Polo GTi R5 on a rare gravel outing and rallying PR guru Matt Cotton in his Peugeot 208 R2.

Saturday features one of the most compact legs ever run on the event with the first car away from Coniston at 1000hrs and due back at the finish at 1320hrs after 37 stage miles.

ESCORT BATTLER COLE PREPARES FOR ASPHALT ATTACK

Ford Escort Mk2 driver Brad Cole has confirmed plans for a second season in the BTRDA Protyre Asphalt Rally Championship, following a successful inaugural campaign.

The Somerset-based driver came very close to winning the over two-litre class B13 after a big battle with Darren Atkinson. Cole and has already stripped

the engine, gearbox, suspension, and axle from the car, ready for rebuilding over the winter. Cole told MN: "We have started early on preparing for 2023, because the calibre of events and the standard of competition in the Protyre series make it extremely tough to do well in, so we need to be as far ahead of the game as we can."

Cole admits to being surprised at his pace throughout 2022, when he finished seventh in the overall drivers' standings and with class wins at the Argyll Rally and Rali Ceredigion. "We went into our first year looking to learn the rallies and maybe get a good result or two," he said. "Halfway through the season we realised we could win the

class. From then on, we pushed more. Unfortunately, the car broke on the title decider on the Isle of Man. In 2023 we aim to attack and try to win class B13."

Cole will resume his successful in-car partnership with co-driver Jamie Vaughan starting at the East Riding Stages in Yorkshire on February 26.



Cole is going on the attack for 2023

DISASTER FOR DICKINSONS AT CADWELL PARK RUN

Father-and-son Mark and Oli Dickinson suffered a disastrous first-stage retirement at Cadwell Park 10 day ago. Their freshly prepared

Rover 200 went off the startline of stage one, got into second gear and the complete gear linkage collapsed. They pulled off 150 metres into the stage and were out for the day.

It was their first event together and Mark's first rally for nearly 10 years since doing the Roger Albert Clark Rally in 2013. Having rallied an Escort and a Peugeot 205 on

occasional events over a 30-year period, Dickinson Sr had not rallied for nine years since getting his previous Rover 200 to the finish of the Roger Albert Clark.

MOFFETT PLOTS ANOTHER NATIONAL BID

Josh Moffett says he will bid for the Irish National Rally Championship again in 2023 after winning all of the rounds he started this year in his family-backed Hyundai i20 R5.

Moffett clinched the Vard Memorial Trophy with an event to spare to become only the seventh person in the history of the competition to win it twice. He also dominated the Irish Tarmac Rally Championship in the same car.

He is now aiming to draw level on three titles with Niall Maguire and Declan Boyle. Moffett said: "It's been a

good year for us but it was by no means easy. I'm only 30 now and I feel that I have the capacity to win it another few times. Obviously, you never know who comes to the table, but we're certainly at the top of our game at the minute."

Moffett begins the defence of his National crown at the Midland Rally on March 5, followed by the Circuit of Kerry (April 2), Cavan Rally (May 28), Raven's Rock (July 2), Sligo Stages (July 16), ALMC Rally (August 13), Clare Rally (September 24) and Fastnet Rally (October 29).

GREENSALL GOES BACK TO RALLYING AT CADWELL



Greensall enjoyed Cadwell Park return

Prolific racer Nigel Greensall returned to rallying at Cadwell Park recently on a free weekend between racing at Daytona and Sebring.

Greensall marked his birthday at Cadwell at the wheel of his Toyota GT86 and with experienced co-driver Graham Wild alongside for the first time. Greensall said: "I've done 56 races so far this year but I'd not been to Cadwell for about 20 years. I used to race there a lot in my early career."

After Cadwell, Greensall flew back to America to race six different cars in the Classic Sebring 12 hour meeting. "We got back from Daytona just over a week before Cadwell, and then went to

Jarama for a day with Fernando Alonso! He was doing passenger rides and we were putting the video on it. So I got to have a passenger ride with him, which was fantastic."

Greensall's only other rally this year was Clacton in April but he hopes to do more next year and has a fleet of three Toyota GT86s, now in the care of Geoff Steel.

"This was a chance to come back and do another rally and it's pure coincidence it was my birthday. But it was a free weekend. The next rally hopefully will be Brands Hatch in January and we'll have the customer cars out as well as mine."



Moffett will return in the Hyundai i20

RALLY NEWS

NIGHT STAGES FOR SPEYSIDE ANNIVERSARY

To mark the 25th running of the Speyside Stages, the Scottish Rally Championship event will feature forests stages on the Friday evening when it runs next April.

The Speyside is a popular round of the SRC and next spring the event will start with two short forest stages in the dark on Friday, April 21, before a full day of action on Saturday. The first leg of the rally will run with reverse seeding.

Saturday's route includes the popular stages in Elgin's Cooper Park, before crews head out into the forests of Moray and West Aberdeenshire to cover more than 50 stage miles for the first time in the event's history.

Clerk of the course Neil Shanks said: "As a competitor, some of my favourite events have featured night stages and when the club was thinking about ways to mark the silver anniversary, I explored the possibility of expanding the event."

RACER MOWLEM TO MAKE RALLY DEBUT IN GRIZEDALE

Le Mans racer to tackle Cumbrian event alongside Matt Edwards

Photos: Paul and Ben Lawrence, Motorsport Images



Mowlem (inset) will drive this Escort

By Paul Lawrence

International sportscar and GT racer Johnny Mowlem will make his rallying debut on this weekend's Grizedale Stages with British Rally Championship winner Matt Edwards as his co-driver.

Mowlem has raced extensively over more than 30 years and has competed at Le Mans 10 times. But now he will face a totally new challenge in Grizedale forest in the Lake District.

Through his Red River Sport

management operation, Mowlem manages the racing programmes of several amateur racers including Welshman Bonamy Grimes. Under Mowlem's guidance, Grimes rose up the GT ladder to race at Le Mans but has recently tried his hand at rallying. Grizedale was due to be his third rally, but when he could not make the event, Grimes offered the Ford Escort Mk2 drive to Mowlem as a thank you.

Mowlem said: "Bonamy always talked about doing a bit of rallying. We went ice driving together and he loved

it. Guy Smith, who's one of my old racing team-mates, had been rallying in a Ford Escort and he said I needed to get in touch with Matt Edwards."

Grimes then did the Greystoke and Cambrian rallies and is likely to do more in 2023. But for this weekend, Mowlem will venture into the unknown. He said: "I've driven a rally car round Sweet Lamb once. That's as much as I know about rallying other than it was enough to realise it's a very, very different discipline and needs to be treated with a different respect!"



Laura Connell co-drove for Scott

FEMALE CO-DRIVERS DOMINATE CADWELL PARK ENTRY

The top three seeds in the recent Cadwell Park Stages were all female navigators. Ashleigh Morris sat alongside British Rallycross champion Ollie O'Donovan, Emma Morrison was with John Griffiths and Laura Connell co-drove for Andy Scott.

It was possibly the first time a significant rally had featured female co-drivers in the top three seeded cars. All three are hugely experienced co-drivers. Morris has been rallying since 2006 and was on her fifth event this season with O'Donovan, while Morrison is one of Britain's busiest co-drivers and will tackle up to 20 rallies this year in more than a dozen different cars. Connell has split her time this year co-driving Scott and John Stone in his VW Polo GTi R5.

"I hadn't realised at first until I started looking through the entry list more, but I don't think I have seen that before," said Morrison before sharing Griffiths' Ford Fiesta R5 to victory on the second round of the MN-supported Circuit Rally Championship. Scott/Connell took second in their Ford Fiesta S2000 Turbo while O'Donovan and Morris clinched fourth in their Hyundai i20 R5.



Griffiths leads CRC points

GRIFFITHS TAKES EARLY CIRCUIT RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP LEAD

After two of the eight events in the Motorsport News-supported Circuit Rally Championship, John Griffiths has taken the early points' lead in his Ford Fiesta R5 with a fourth place at Oulton Park and a win at Cadwell Park. Emma Morrison and Laura Connell are

typed at the top of the co-drivers' points.

Around 40 crews have so far scored points at Oulton Park and Cadwell Park and the championship now has a December break before round three at Brands Hatch on Saturday, January 21. Within 24 hours of entries opening

for the Brands Hatch Stages, more than 90 entries had been taken for the 100 available places.

The date for round six of the season, the Dukeries Rally at Donington Park, has now been confirmed as Sunday, March 12.

ROAD RALLY ROUND-UP

HUNTER AND EVANS' FORD ESCORT WINS THE BEAVER ROAD RALLY

The Beaver Rally moved to a new start venue near Scarborough to allow for a more demanding route.

The first two-thirds of the event was plot 'n' bash, with hard-to-find junctions. The final 40 miles was pre-plot and included a run through Wykeham Forest.

Darren Moon had a late

call-up for the event but was an early retirement after the engine blew on the Ford Escort that he was sharing with Sam Spencer.

Richard Hemmingway/Sam Collis led after the opening 40 miles; they were seven seconds ahead of Richard Hunter/Gary Evans.

They then dropped 12 seconds on a section cleaned by their rivals, so at petrol Hunter/Evans held a narrow lead of five seconds. These two crews were well clear of the rest of the field.

The pre-plot run suited the Derbyshire pairing and they drew away to finish almost two minutes ahead

of Hemmingway/Collis.

The Northumberland Border Rally attracted a quality entry for the Mini-only event. It was by won by the Cooper S of Paul Crosby/Andy Pullan. The rally consisted of 10 tests in Lynfield Park during the afternoon followed by a tough 90-mile

plot 'n' bash night rally.

Ian Mills

Results

Beaver Road Rally

Organiser: Beverley & District Motor Club

When: November 19-20 **Where:** North

Yorkshire Championships: ANCC, EMAMC,

ANEMMC & SD34 **Route:** 120 miles

Starters: 22

1 Richard Hunter/Gary Evans (Ford Escort)

4m55s; 2 Richard Hemmingway/Sam Collis (Proton Satia) +1m41s; 3 Neil

Paylor/James Greenhough (Satia); 4

James Taylor/Simon Bentley (Ford Fiesta ST150); 5 Mark Slatcher/Alistair Leggett (BMW 318Ti); 6 John Cornall/Martin Cornall (Peugeot 206 GTi); 7 Ryan Tubman/David Tubman (Proton Persona); 8 Mark Johnson/Steven Butler (Toyota Corolla); 9 Richard Henman/Jake Simms (Peugeot 106); 10 David Wainwright/Vonnie Wainwright (Satia). **Class winners:** Tubman/Tubman; Mark Jones/ Corey Powell-Jones (Peugeot 205).

Northumberland Border Rally

Organiser: Mini Cooper Register **When:**

November 19 **Where:** Northumberland

Route: 90 miles and 10 tests **Starters:** 14. 1 Paul Crosby/Andy Pullan (Austin Cooper S) 1F21m35s; 2 Graeme Comthwaite/All Procter (Morris Mini) +7m40s; 3 Thomas Robinson/Lynsey Procter (Morris Cooper); 4 Keith Proudfoot/James Heron (Austin Mini); 5 Luke Carroll/Nell Kinch (Mini); 6 Richard Derrick/Robert Duley (Morris Cooper); 7 Peter Metcalfe/Guy Wickham (Mini); 8 Stephen Reynolds/Stuart Lamb (Morris Mini Minor); 9 Sally Ann Hewitt/Mark Lewis (Mini Clubman); 10 Andrew Brookes/Nigel Fraser (Austin Cooper). **Class winners:** Chris Pettite/John MacWhirter (Rover Cooper).



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SPORTING SCENE NEWS

WRC ACE LOEB TO TACKLE A RAFT OF ANDROS TROPHY ROUNDS OVER THE WINTER SEASON

French mixed-surface legend to tackle as many rounds as his diary allows in the all-electric series

Photos: Extreme E, Tom Banks, Andros Trophy, Nitro RX



By Hal Ridge

Rally legend and newly crowned Extreme E champion Sebastian Loeb will return to the Andros Trophy ice racing series this winter for selected appearances, fitted around his Dakar Rally effort.

The 48-year-old Frenchman will drive for his own Sebastian Loeb Racing team in an all-electric AS-01 machine and he will share the driving duties in the Elite Pro category with fellow World Rallycross Championship driver

Jerome Grosset-Janin.

Loeb will contest the season-opener at Val Thorens this weekend before returning later in the winter, after his Dakar Rally outing. Grosset-Janin will contest the bulk of the campaign. Loeb is a two-time podium finisher in the e-Trophy Andros since the series switched to all-electric cars at the top level for the 2019-2020 season.

French TV Formula 1 presenter Margot Laffite will drive the same car as Loeb and Grosset-Janin, competing in the Elite class, while Elite champion Dorian Boccolacci will step up

to Elite Pro in the sister car. Rallycross driver Edgar Maloigne will drive the second SLR machine in the Elite class for his Andros Trophy debut season.

Joining Loeb on the grid at the opening round will be fellow French World Rally Championship driver Adrien Fourmaux, the latter making his debut in the four-wheel-drive, four-wheel-steer ice racing machine. Fourmaux will race for the DR squad in Elite Pro, while the same car will be campaigned in the Elite class by the experienced Eddy Benezet.

THOMAS SET TO JOIN THE SUPERCAR INFLUX IN IRELAND

British Rallycross Championship regular Roger Thomas will make his maiden start at the Mondello Park circuit next week, competing in the final round of the Irish Rallycross Championship with his M-Sport-built Ford Fiesta Supercar.

Thomas contested a selected programme of events in the 5 Nations BRX series this year,

but missed the mid-campaign visit to Mondello Park amid a number of niggling issues for the WRC-derived Supercar.

Thomas will be part of a strong Supercar line up in a resurgence for the Irish scene, with points leader Derek Tohill and frontrunner Tommy Graham expected to be rejoined by Declan Kelly, who

was forced to miss the previous round two weeks ago while awaiting replacement gearbox components.

A third OlsbergsMSE-built Ford Fiesta joined the IRX grid with Michael Leonard at the penultimate round of the campaign recently, while a fourth OMSE machine is rumoured to also be joining the series. Tohill leads the standings into the

final round as the 2016 European champion bids to claim his sixth Irish title, while his PFCRX teammate Peter McGarry sits second in the overall standings with his Supernatural Volvo C30. McGarry will face a battle for the overall podium and the category title at Mondello Park, where he takes on Vauxhall Corsa racer Willie Coyne.



Thomas (right) will finally get to race at Mondello

The Nitro series will now expand into ice racing



NITRO ADDS ICE RACING EVENTS FOR 2023

The Nitro Rallycross Championship will host a pair of ice racing events in the New Year, both held in Canada.

The series will visit former World Rallycross Championship venue Trois-

Rivieres for the seventh round of the campaign on January 21-22, the circuit expected to be created in the horse-racing section of the previous World RX track, before heading to Calgary on February 4-5 for its penultimate weekend.

The series is yet to announce the venue for the 2022-2023 season finale in March, but the Saudi Arabian event planned to be run in December has been postponed, as yet without a new date.

URUGUAY NATURAL ENERGY X PRIX, URUGUAY: BY HAL RIDGE

NOVEMBER 26-27

LOEB AND GUTTIERREZ SURVIVE THE ULTIMATE DRAMA FOR EXTREME E TITLE

Driving for Lewis Hamilton's X44 team in an Extreme E season finale of high drama in Uruguay, Sebastian Loeb and Cristina Gutierrez battled back from a huge accident in the opening stages of the weekend to make it to the podium and snatch the title from the grasp of Nico Rosberg's RXR squad.

RXR drivers Johan Kristoffersson and Mikaela Ahlin-Kottulinsky entered the final round of the campaign with a 17-point advantage at the head of the table but, due to technical issues in the penultimate event in Chile, hadn't quite put the title out of the reach of their rivals.

On a grass- and dirt-based course in Uruguay, Swede Ahlin-Kottulinsky was among those to run into trouble in the opening qualifying session of the weekend. With cars running one at a time on track, the RXR machine rolled onto its roof. She hadn't been alone either as JBXE driver Hedda Hosas was the first to trip up and the pair were

subsequently followed by X44's Gutierrez, the latter having the biggest of the incidents.

While the JBXE and RXR teams were able to repair their cars for qualifying two, X44 had to switch to the spare 'championship' car, such was the damage to its own machine.

In Q2, Kristoffersson led from the front of his race for RXR but was rear-ended in the opening stint by Nasser Al-Attiyah, causing significant damage to the RXR machine, which then failed in the driver-switch zone and Ahlin-Kottulinsky was unable to complete the run.

X44, meanwhile, backed out of the pack in the other race, Loeb opting to instead push hard for the best time in the Super Sector. He was already resigned to starting in the crazy race on Sunday but he knew that the five points for the best time in the Super Sector could prove pivotal, and so they did.

While the Acciona Sainz and Chip Ganassi Racing teams, both also with

an outside chance of the title, both qualified for the semi-finals, the qualifying order was led by new Veloce Racing signings Kevin Hansen and Molly Taylor. The X44 and RXR teams were forced to compete in the Crazy Race, the winner of which taking up the final grid position for the final.

If RXR won the Crazy Race, it would take the crown for a second year in succession. However if X44 won the fight would remain wide-open.

In a contact-filled dramatic opening few corners of the Crazy Race the RXR machine, driven by Ahlin-Kottulinsky, suffered broken steering. X44 was leading out front, fending off the attentions of the Xite Energy Racing team. Ahlin-Kottulinsky dragged the Rosberg car to the driver-switch zone, where the squad attempted to repair the car for five-time World RX champion Kristoffersson to head out on track in a bid to better Loeb's Super Sector effort, albeit with the track in worse condition. But the team was disqualified for

having too many mechanics in the switch area.

With RXR watching from the sidelines, the ABT Cupra squad led from the front in the final, Klara Andersson and Nasser Al-Attiyah winning on Andersson's first full race weekend, while McLaren finished second with Tanner Foust and Emma Gilmour.

X44 battled in the dust and couldn't finish higher than fourth on track, having fought for the lead in the opening corners. One place away from the title-winning third place they needed, the team was elevated a position when they Andretti United team was given a seven-second Switch Zone penalty, handing X44 third in the race and the crown.

Results

Extreme E Round 5: (All Odyssey 21): 1 Nasser Al-Attiyah/Klara Andersson (ABT Cupra) +10m26.537s; 2 Emma Gilmour/Tanner Foust (McLaren) +3.427s; 3 Sebastian Loeb/Cristina Gutierrez (X44) +10.467s; 4 Timmy Hansen/Catie Munnings (Andretti United) +11.029s; 5 Kevin Hansen/Molly Taylor (Veloce Racing) +15.094s.



Al-Attiyah and Andersson took the win



A tense final delivered a title for X44 team

HISTORICS

DOWN THE PUB

JORDAN HARRISON

Class FF1600 champion
Age: 31 Lives: Beaconsfield



Harrison: Lola T540E fanatic

He won back-to-back titles

"It was another good year and the car has been really good. We started really well at Snetterton in April and we didn't know how competitive we were going to be against everybody else, with people like Richard Tarling out there. I rather kept my head down before the season, but it's been really good. I hit my team-mate Tom McArthur in the last race when he spun. But aside from that, there were no real problems."

He has run with Simon Hadfield's team

"Simon's done the vast majority of the development on my car, the Lola T540E. It's nice to run with those guys and obviously my dad Mark does a lot of the hard graft. But they certainly have had a guiding hand on the project. I think our pace has gone up again this year. I think we took a bit of a step forward. We obviously did some more stuff on the car over last winter. I'm relatively inexperienced and this was only my fourth or fifth season of proper racing. So I'm still getting faster. There's more time in me yet."

Plans for 2023 are not settled

"I'm not sure yet. Well obviously the Lola is our car, so I might be out again next year, or we're thinking about whether there's anything else we'd like to race. A slicks-and-wings single-seater would be nice. That would be fun to do if the right car was available and that kind of thing, then I think we'd do that. But let's see what happens: there's a long winter to go yet."

There are not many Lolas on the grid

"I think they only sold 12 of the T540 in the UK, even though it was relatively competitive at the time. There was a lot of them sold to America. I'm surprised, to be honest, that nobody has been and bought one, given that we've had a lot of success with it. I think it's the best car out there."

He could go for another Classic title

"A hat-trick of Classic Formula Ford titles would be another achievement. It's like Simon Hadfield said, two is really good but three gets a bit cute!"

FORD AND SHANKS WIN NEW ZEALAND SILVER FERN EPIC

Ford Escort Mk2 pairing top the packed entry on Kiwi classic event

Photos: Paul Lawrence

By Paul Lawrence

The Anglo-Scottish pairing of James Ford and Neil Shanks scored a mighty victory on the Silver Fern Rally in New Zealand when the gravel marathon finished on Saturday.

For much of the week-long rally on South Island, Ford and Shanks battled with the similar Ford Escort of Jeff Judd and Stephane Prevot.

But when Judd slid off the road on day four, Lancastrian Ford took a lead he would never lose. Judd's off cost him 10 minutes and left Ford with a commanding lead that he was able to control in a measured drive to win by just over three minutes. He follows previous UK winners, Vince Bristow, Meirion Evans and Matthew Robinson on the world's



Ford and Shanks took an NZ victory

most spectacular gravel rally.

For both Ford and Shanks it was their first time on the event in a Ford Escort Mk2 from the Wales Motorsport team run by Evans. A massive team effort kept them running strongly to the finish despite some clutch issues later in the rally.

Shanks, one of Scotland's leading co-drivers, said: "This has been the most epic adventure you can imagine. The rally is everything you hear about and more. Over the last couple of days we've been going just quick enough to keep concentration and slow

enough to avoid issues. James drove a brilliant rally. We're so lucky to get to experience this."

Fellow Scottish co-driver Michael Hendry partnered Ally MacKay to third overall, while other Brits in the top 10 included Simon Tysse in fifth and Phil Squires in eighth.

FOUR EVENTS FOR HRDC GERRY MARSHALL TROPHY



Gerry Marshall races will be a highlight for the HRDC in 2023

The Historic Racing Drivers' Club has unveiled its 2023 programme, capped by four high-profile dates for the Gerry Marshall Trophy for Group 1 Touring Cars.

After two pilot races this season, the Marshall Trophy for the cars up to 1983 will move to a higher level with dates at the Donington Historic Festival, the Masters Brands Hatch GP weekend, the Oulton Park Gold Cup and the Motor Racing Legends

Silverstone GP date in October.

The other HRDC categories, the Jack Sears Trophy and the combined Allstars and Classic Alfas, will also have four rounds, including the Historic on the Hill event at Lydden on June 25 when a pre '66 Mini race will be added to the programme.

All HRDC racers have the chance to test at Goodwood on March 27 before the series open at the end of April at the Donington Historic Festival.

SILVERSTONE CLASSIC GETS NEW BRAND

The Silverstone Classic is being rebranded for 2023 to be titled the Silverstone Festival.

The new name reflects the event's broadening appeal as an event to include a wide array of attractions beyond

just historic racing. Live music, a foodie fest and current F1 car displays were all included in the 2022 edition but for the August Bank Holiday weekend of 2023 there is a new brand. What will not change,

according to the promoters, is the extensive programme of historic racing. All of the grids that ran in '22 are due back next year at the event that can trace its history back to the inaugural Historic Festival in 1990.



Classic has a new title

GT1 CARS TO DEMO AT GOODWOOD MEMBERS MEET



GT1 cars will be on show at Goodwood meeting

A spectacular array of GT1 cars will take part in high-speed demonstration sessions at the 80th Goodwood Members' Meeting on April 15-16.

For the first time, the Goodwood circuit will host a collection of top-flight GT1 cars from the early 2000s in demonstration sessions on the Sussex track.

As the Goodwood circuit

celebrates its 75th anniversary in 2023, the GT1 race winners expected include the likes of the Aston Martin DBR9, Ferrari 550 GT1, Maserati MC12, Chrysler Viper GTS-R and Lister Storm.

The Le Mans centenary will also be a central theme at the Festival of Speed in July, which will host its biggest ever collection of cars and drivers from the Le Mans story.

IN BRIEF

George Cooper

MN was sad to learn of the death of former Formula Junior racer George Cooper. The Scotsman was a great enthusiast for the racing cars that shared his name and was a regular competitor in races and speed events, notably in a Formula Junior Cooper T59. He also competed in a Cooper MG and a Cooper Bobtail sports car over his long racing career.

Ron Overend

National racing in the Midlands lost a great supporter when Ron Overend passed away last week. Along with his wife Edwina, Ron was a key member and later a director of the British Racing and Sports Car Club and went on to run the Mallory Park circuit in the 1980s and 1990s. MN sends sincere condolences to his family and many friends across the sport.

LE-JOG is go

The annual LE-JOG, the Land's End to John O'Groats reliability trial, will start in Cornwall on Saturday morning. Run by HERO-ERA, around 50 cars are due to start the 1300-mile event, with the first cars due at John O'Groats on Tuesday morning. The two overnight halts will be in Telford on Saturday and Gretna Green on Sunday.

Daimler to Monte

Motorsport journalist Peter Baker will contest Rallye Monte Carlo Historique in January at the wheel of his 1954 Daimler Conquest, which has been seen in hillclimbs this year. Baker is proud to have been allocated number 277 for the January event, as carried by Nancy Mitchell and Lola Grounds in 1955 on their way to 17th overall on the Monte Carlo Rally with a similar car.

Webster ahead

Although the event is not a round of any historic rally championship, three leading historic crews are in the top 20 seeds for this weekend's Grizedale Stages. Leading the trio of Ford Escort MK2s will be Simon Webster and Jez Rogers and they will be followed by the similar BDC-powered car of Matthew Robinson and Sam Collis. Chasing them both will be Stuart Eggstone and Brian Hodgson in their Pinto engined example.

F3 and Atlantic

The Historic Sports Car Club categories of Classic Formula 3 and Historic Formula Atlantic will share grids in 2023 to deliver a strong field of 1970s and early 1980s F3 cars and pre '80 Formula Atlantics. The races over five weekends will make up the calendar, starting at Snetterton in late April. Newly crowned CF3 champion Stephen Barlow has taken over the series chair for the F3 element.

1950s trial cars

Classes for the Heritage Trials movement, which is promoting the use of 1950s trials specials, are planned for the Cleve Hills Trial in January and the Land's End Trial at Easter. The plan is for the older cars to tackle some of the less challenging hills on each event. The Vintage Sports-Car Club Wessex Trial, which focuses on the 1950s cars, is scheduled for April 14-15.

CHRISTMAS CHEER THAT LASTS ALL YEAR!



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AWARDS SPECIAL



THE VOICE OF BRITISH MOTORSPORT

MOTORSPORT NEWS

**THE BREAK-OUT STAR
OF SINGLE-SEATERS**



Alex Dunne: a man who's already in a hurry

The 2022 Motorsport News gongs are ready to be handed out: the results are here!

SHINING A LIGHT ON THE STARS OF 2022



National rallying's
David Henderson



BTCC title winner
Tom Ingram

By Matt James

The 2022 Motorsport News Awards are here, and we've been able to highlight some of the most significant performers and events from the last 12 months.

Our readers have hand-picked their Race and Rally Drivers of the Year, while our panel of experts have deliberated over the shortlists to select the winners of the other six categories, and the results make for some highly interesting reading. We have chosen our Sporting Scene Driver of the Year, Historic Driver of the Year, Team of the Year, alongside our Rising Star of the Year. There are also accolades for the Event and the Series of the Year.

We hope you enjoy our Awards special, and remember to check the Motorsport News section of the fastcar.co.uk website for future special polls.

**THE TEEN REWRITING THE
RALLYCROSS RECORD BOOKS**

*We interview
the sensation
of the mixed-
surface sport*



**MAKING A BIG SPLASH ON A
SHORT OVAL CELEBRATION**

*Looking
back at the
stand-out
events of
2022*



MN AWARDS SPECIAL

Photos: Red Bull Content Pool, mkpics, Paul Lawrence, Jakob Ebrey



National rallying headline-makers were plentiful during 2022

PUTTING THE CROWNING GLORY ON A FANTASTIC 2022 SEASON

The second Motorsport News Awards are here – we applaud each winner



Stars of the British Touring Car Championship always pushed hard

The secrets are out, the debates have been concluded and the winners have been declared. The results of the second Motorsport News awards are here – and they make for some fascinating reading.

We have scoured the service parks, pits and paddocks to come up with our stand-out performers of the last 12 months. What was evident from the moment the motors finally fired into life at the start of 2022, entry lists were bulging and the turnstiles were clicking in a very healthy fashion. In the end, the competitions were fierce and there were champions crowned and that is what we have sought to highlight here.

In looking back over the action we have all enjoyed in recent months, we have not just selected the champions and the headline-makers as the recipients of our special MN awards. Motorsport is about so much more than just the trophies and there are numerous untold stories and near misses that are just as meritorious when you consider all that takes place on the track or on the stages.

Our experts – who spend every weekend stage-side or on the spectator banks – have carefully looked through the nominations from the head-turning performances and we have pinpointed our winners. It is unlikely that everyone will agree with all of the choices, but that is one of the joys of dissecting the competition that is played out in front of us every year.

The online polls that we ran to unearth the National Rally Driver of the Year and the National Racing Driver of the Year were a huge success, and we owe a debt of gratitude to everyone who took the time to make their voices heard.

Matt James

Editor

Motorsport News

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SPORTING SCENE DRIVER OF THE YEAR

PATRICK O'DONOVAN

Photos: Tom Banks, Jan Kare Rafoss



Teen was top Brit at Dreux round



O'Donovan celebrates a RX2e victory

PATRICK O'DONOVAN: SIGNALLING THE INTENT RIGHT FROM THE GET-GO

Hal Ridge tells the story of a barn-storming season from the rapid Irish teenager

Just days after this 18th birthday, Patrick O'Donovan made note of his intentions in his rallycross Supercar debut at Lydden Hill. But it wasn't the remarkable second-place finish that indicated what might be possible in 2022.

It was, in fact, a mistake in Q2 during the season-opener that gave a hint to both his ambition and confidence at the wheel. Having been beaten away from the startline, he tried to send his Ford Fiesta sideways around the outside of Oliver Bennett's top-specification BMW Mini and reigning British champion Derek Tohill. That O'Donovan clipped the wall and spun mattered little. The fact he had the composure to even attempt the move turned heads.

It was at the second double-header of the campaign at Pembrey where the teenager claimed a maiden win, before repeating the feat the very next day. This was done while driving his family team's Ford Fiesta that, compared to the opposition, was becoming long in the tooth.

O'Donovan repeated a Pembrey double in August by adding that to wins at Mondello Park and being best of the British Championship runners at Dreux in France by some margin. He hustled the Fiesta to fifth overall against French Championship contenders in very latest Supercar machinery.

Just making the final at the penultimate round (before the final day of racing was abandoned) at Lydden Hill would be enough for O'Donovan to follow in father Ollie's footsteps by winning the British title but stalling on the startline of the semi-final wasn't in the plan. With the engine refired, O'Donovan went on a mission. He caught and passed the entire

field to win which put his points lead out of his rivals' reach. As if to demonstrate that further, in awful conditions O'Donovan won the final, a night race, by almost 40 seconds.

"You don't get the time to think about things like that until it's over," said O'Donovan when asked how he felt after stalling on that semi-final grid. "My full focus was just on getting the car started, and getting straight back into the race. I was a bit flustered, and with the lack of vision from being behind everyone, with the mud sprayed onto the windscreen it was hard to see some of the other cars.

"I didn't know I'd overtaken [title rival] Julian [Godfrey, over the jump] until I couldn't see him in front of me after the landing. It was a real sense of relief when I got out of the car. It meant a lot for me to have that kind of damage-limitation drive, especially in front of a home crowd. That made the event much more special actually."

He's right that previous adversity can make success all the sweeter, something O'Donovan also experienced in his second RX2e campaign racing in the World Rallycross Championship's single-make, all-electric undercard.

After a difficult opening two rounds in Sweden and Norway, he struck back in Latvia to claim a maiden international win before repeating the performance at Spa. But which tastes better, the champagne from winning the British title, or those international victories?

"To win on an international platform means so much more," he says. "As much as I love racing in British RX, the level of competition in the World RX events is just so high that to get a good result you have to put everything together. The transition between the Supercar and RX2e car is easier than you'd think though. In terms of speed they are similar, but it's



O'Donovan makes his move to pass multiple champion Julian Godfrey

getting used to not having the engine braking in the RX2e.

"In the wet I'd take the Supercar but when it's dry and everything is dialled in, you can bang in such consistent laps in the RX2e and it's a really satisfying car to drive."

While the end result in O'Donovan's second RX2e term wasn't what was hoped for, eventually ending up fourth overall, his success in the British series a week after the RX2e finale in Spain superseded that. But did the youngster really think becoming British Rallycross' youngest-ever champion was possible ahead of the season with only one campaign of senior rallycross competition under his belt?

"My hopes and expectations were totally different things coming into the season," he grins. "Obviously I thought it would be tough to get results, and I genuinely would have been pleased to have a year learning, but secretly, I'd be lying if I said winning the championship isn't what I was hoping for all along, that's the same for any competitive person."

The single highlight of O'Donovan's year isn't becoming champion though, it's his win at Mondello Park. It was actually gifted to him by father Ollie, who rolled out of the throttle in the final corner to let his boy by, sacrificing what would have been the 2007 champion's first win since June 2018.

"He let me by so I could get a few extra championship points in case I needed them at the end of the year," says O'Donovan Jr. "It meant a lot to me, to the team, and I know it meant a lot to him. It would have been nice to return the favour at Lydden Hill because he was second for a while, but hopefully I get a chance to do that someday."

The pair had also raced together in the European RX1 (Supercar) series opener in Hungary in May, but looking forward, O'Donovan isn't certain where he'll be competing next season.

"In an ideal scenario I'd love to be in World RX, racing amongst the top drivers," he says. "Obviously, there are restrictions, mainly the budget needed. We're working hard on that and will see what we can do. If I can't be at the top level, we'll do something else to stay as sharp, and relevant, as possible, in the hope there is the chance to step up to the World RX in the next couple of years."

Part of a cluster of rising talent on the international rallycross roster who refreshingly are not afraid to let their personalities shine though, winning the British title is O'Donovan's biggest accolade to-date.

But in years to come, winning the GB1 plate could be just another statistic within an already impressive career. ■

"It would be nice to return the favour..."

Patrick O'Donovan



Spa was a victorious weekend



HISTORICS DRIVER OF THE YEAR SAMUEL HARRISON



Harrison (right)
scooped 19 wins

THE TEENAGE SENSATION

Samuel Harrison, who will not turn 19 until Christmas Day, has scooped the award as the leading historic ace. **Paul Lawrence** chatted to him

Samuel Harrison has had a superb season, winning in three different single-seaters and showing well in a fourth in a year where his prime focus was to win the coveted and fiercely competitive Historic Formula Ford 1600 title.

Harrison burst onto the historic racing scene for the 2021 season and immediately turned heads with his pace in the Elden Mk8 from the Buckton family squad. However, to those who dug a little into his karting pedigree, Harrison's early pace should not have been a surprise.

The now 18-year-old had competed successfully at an international level in karts and was clearly a ferocious young talent. However, like so many, the budget to jump into modern single-seater racing was simply out of reach. Instead, given that his father Tim had raced historics, a move into historic racing gave him the chance to gain seat time and experience at an affordable level.

He was quickly a frontrunner in Historic Formula Ford and was far from overawed by some of the hugely experienced company he was racing wheel-to-wheel with. That first season brought good pace, some podiums, some moments and some non-finishes. He ended the season fifth in the table but he'd made his point and set himself up as a title favourite for 2022. That title favourite status took another step forward when he signed to lead Mike O'Brien's Speedsport team in its Merlyn Mk20.

He was quickly on the pace and battled fiercely with Tom McArthur and Callum Grant in the opening weekend at Snetterton. McArthur and Ben Mitchell headed him on the Silverstone GP circuit but at Cadwell Harrison dominated after McArthur went off from their battle.

"I think I have refined my driving"

Samuel Harrison



More success came in
Historic Formula Junior

Across the second half of the season, he won eight out of nine races, with only a lowly score at Donington when victory on the road became 13th place after a raft of track-limit penalties were handed out. The title was secure by early September and he wrapped up the season with another double victory at Silverstone in October.

But it wasn't only in the Merlyn that Harrison demonstrated his pace. His partnership with Speedsport opened up opportunities in Historic Formula 3 and Historic Formula Junior. In the one-litre F3 class he jumped into the team's Chevron B15 to win every race he contested. That was another eight race wins added to his tally and had he gone to the final race weekend at Dijon, he would most likely have won the HF3 title. However, the early October race meeting clashed with his first couple of weeks at university where he is studying aeronautical engineering, and a sensible decision was made to not take time out to race in France when his studies were just beginning.

However, a week after Dijon, he drove another car from the Speedsport stable when the team's Brabham BT6 Formula Junior became available. Michael O'Brien got a late call to do British GT at Donington and Harrison jumped at the chance to race the Junior. Two more consummate wins were the predictable result. Then, on any spare weekends, he jumped into the family's Lola T240 Formula Atlantic car, and despite a range of gremlins showed tremendous pace against the more powerful two-litre Historic Formula 2 cars.

Harrison told Motorsport News: "It's more than we could have really dreamt of at the beginning of the season. It's been incredible

and I'm really pleased with how it went. Big thanks go to Mike O'Brien and the Speedsport team.

"To be able to drive a wide variety of cars was really important. Winning the Historic Formula Ford championship was the aim of this year, and hopefully for it to lead on to other things. The Historic F3 was a really nice car to drive, although a little small for my liking. If the final races had been at Donington or somewhere, it might have been different but to be away for four or five days wasn't really practical. The Formula Junior was probably my favourite car to have driven this year. It was a real joy. All the cars were superbly prepared thanks to my engineer Jordan Taylor at Speedsport."

The driver from Ripon in North Yorkshire, who will turn 19 on Christmas Day, was a relatively shy and quiet individual when he started racing. But that's another aspect of his racing that he's worked on with encouragement from the experienced O'Brien. "I worked on how to present myself and I think I've refined my driving to the point where I'm ready for the next level now. To be named Motorsport News Historics Driver of the Year is unbelievable. I'd hoped for good things from this year, but maybe not as much as I've been fortunate enough to achieve."

Harrison is not about to try and go the modern single-seater racing route. Instead, his ambition is to make a career as a sportscar and GT racer and to compete at Le Mans and that seems eminently achievable. "We've got nothing yet for next year but we will try. Hopefully this year I've shown people that they can trust me, and I'm worth supporting further," he said.

If the sports and GT door doesn't open for



Photos: Paul Lawrence

Teenager Samuel Harrison stood out in 2022

SEASON WINS

SAMUEL HARRISON - 19 RACE WINS IN 2022

DATE	CIRCUIT	SERIES	CAR
April 23	Snetterton	Historic Formula 3	Chevron B15
April 24	Snetterton	Historic Formula 3	Chevron B15
June 4	Cadwell Park	Historic FF1600	Merlyn Mk20
June 18	Donington Park	Historic FF1600	Merlyn Mk20
June 18	Donington Park	Historic Formula 3	Chevron B15
June 19	Donington Park	Historic Formula 3	Chevron B15
July 9	Brands Hatch	Historic Formula 3	Chevron B15
July 10	Brands Hatch	Historic FF1600	Merlyn Mk20
July 10	Brands Hatch	Historic FF1600	Merlyn Mk20
July 10	Brands Hatch	Historic Formula 3	Chevron B15
Aug 6	Oulton Park	Historic FF1600	Merlyn Mk20
Sept 3	Croft	Historic FF1600	Merlyn Mk20
Sept 3	Croft	Historic Formula 3	Chevron B15
Sept 4	Croft	Historic FF1600	Merlyn Mk20
Sept 4	Croft	Historic Formula 3	Chevron B15
Oct 15	Silverstone	Formula Junior	Brabham BT6
Oct 15	Silverstone	Historic FF1600	Merlyn Mk20
Oct 16	Silverstone	Formula Junior	Brabham BT6
Oct 16	Silverstone	Historic FF1600	Merlyn Mk20

2023, another season in historics is entirely possible with a likely focus on the Lola in some high profile Historic Formula 2 championship rounds, where he will undoubtedly rattle many of the quicker two-litre cars. "That's our fallback for next year, to come out in the Lola. I'd also hope to have some occasional races in some of Mike's cars. I'm now studying aeronautical engineering and it's a four-year placement, so racing has got to fit around that."

In the meantime, this talented and quietly determined teenager from North Yorkshire has a bright future in the sport. He has tremendous natural pace and has already proven himself versatile and adaptable. A career as a sportscar or GT racer seems firmly within reach. ■



CONGRATULATIONS TOM INGRAM & EXCEL8 MOTORSPORT
‘NATIONAL RACING DRIVER OF THE YEAR’
‘TEAM OF THE YEAR’



MN AWARDS SPECIAL

NATIONAL RACING DRIVER OF THE YEAR

TOM INGRAM

REAPING THE REWARDS FOR THE HARD YARDS OF HOMEWORK

Matt James speaks to the British Touring Car Championship title winner Tom Ingram



Moment of truth: winning at Brands

There were three British Touring Car Championship drivers in contention for the Motorsport News Driver of the Year 2022 and it was the title winner who earned the most votes from the public. Tom Ingram can add that accolade to his already decorated season.

The 29-year-old from High Wycombe was a six-time round winner on his way to a maiden crown, something he has been close to before but never quite been able to grasp. However, the ExceLR8 Motorsport Hyundai i30 Fastback N Performance driver put all his past demons to bed in 2022 and prevailed at Brands Hatch at the beginning of October.

He is thrilled to have been selected as the MN Driver of the Year. He says:

"We had already done the legwork"

Tom Ingram

"It is certainly a cool achievement to win. When the public can get involved and vote for their favourites, it is a nice thing to have your name put forward in the first place, but it is even nicer to win the award. It is a wonderful humbling experience to be voted for and thanks to everyone who did vote for me. It is a nice extra thing to round off this season's success."

The BTCC triumph in 2022 was something that Ingram himself felt was written in the stars. Having finished in the top four of the points on four occasions ahead of this season, the hunger was strong and so was the work ethic that underpinned it.

"You always go into a season with ambitions and optimism, but for some reason this year it just felt a little bit more realistic," says Ingram. "I had all the things in place that I wanted: I had the car I wanted, the engineer I wanted, the team I wanted and all

of those things. But with the changes that were going to be introduced into the series in 2022 with the introduction of the hybrid systems, we just weren't sure [where they would stand]."

While he might not have been certain, his performance at Donington Park's opener in April showed that his confidence wasn't misplaced. He jumped the two BMWs ahead of him in round one and claimed a landmark victory, the first for a hybrid-powered BTCC car.

"I knew we had done a huge amount of work and I liked the fact that a lot of the hybrid development started quite early," he explains of his initial glory. "We started preparing for 2022 halfway through 2021."

"Because we were mostly running with 66kgs [of success ballast] in 2021, what we did is try to focus on the weekend that was coming up but also on what, where and how that weight

was affecting the car. We worked out what, fundamentally, we needed to do to make the car better with that weight [the success ballast rules were scrapped in 2022 to allow for the extra weight of the hybrid systems]. Obviously, you go quicker when there is no weight in the car, but there was no point working on that. We just worked on how to carry the weight which we knew would be coming in 2022."

"We used that as a huge learning process and a simulation for this year. It meant we had already done the legwork so that when we did come into a weekend at, let's say, Croft, we knew that the data we had from 12 months beforehand was quite relevant. It all started to make sense."

And that highlights another particular strength for Ingram in 2022: the ongoing and strong relationship with his engineer Spencer Aldridge. The duo worked together at Speedworks Motorsport from the point Ingram began his BTCC journey in 2014. Moving, as a pair, to ExceLR8 in 2020 gave them the chance to press the reset button.

Aldridge says: "We did make a load of changes when we came in, mostly to the hardware of car to make it more suited to what we wanted from it. We made it as good as it could be. And the same on the set-up: we could go and try things that we never had the option to try before and we could just mould it

around what we specifically wanted rather than what we had inherited."

The relationship between Aldridge and Ingram is so in tune that they can cut down on development time of the car and troubleshoot problems far faster than some other drivers. A strong partnership is not unusual in the BTCC. Ingram acknowledges that: "If you look at the top four finishers in the championship, they all have that solid relationship with their engineers. It is a common theme. There is big value in that."

"As much as we all like to think that it is the driver who is the best part of the car, a lot of the time it will only work if the driver and engineer are in harmony. You could have a fantastic driver, but he is going nowhere if you put him in a shit car. Even if you put a good driver in an alright car, they are only going to reach an alright level. The two need to fall in line. It is us together and just coming into the pits and saying the car is rubbish is useless you haven't put in the groundwork to find out why."

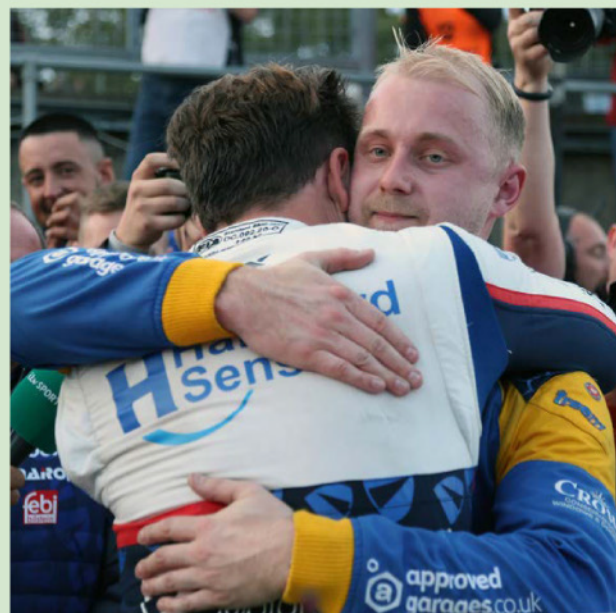
"The good thing with Spencer is that, for example, if I said to him that I have got entry oversteer he knows exactly what I mean by that. If I have got mid-corner understeer, he will know what I am on about. That may sound stupid because understeer is understeer, right? But each driver will describe that and say it in a slightly different manner. Spencer knows exactly what I



A win at Silverstone set Tom Ingram (l) up for a title challenge



Photos: Jakob Ebrey



Passing of the baton: outgoing title holder Sutton greets Ingram



The final weekend at Brands Hatch brought a dominant display

mean when I say things. He will know when I open the radio channel after my first flying lap, he can tell from my opening words, he will know if it is good or bad. There is huge value in that.

"Also, I know Spencer's little go-to things to solve a problem. If I identify an issue, I know what Spencer would do to try and rectify it, so that means I can already be two or three set-up changes down the road before we talk. It is a unique relationship in that way."

The engineer knows that the partnership they have developed helps make his life easier too. Aldridge explains: "Pretty much I can second guess what Tom is going to want from a car. The key to it is that we are really good mates. I think it is unique to us that we came into touring car together and we have grown together. Now, with a lot of the feedback, we don't need to go trawling through the data and the video because we know each other so well. It is not like the usual stuff you do with any other driver."

"We can refer back to something we have done in the past or a feeling we have had with the car before and we know if we have done something specific to cure it. It cuts down the development time massively. In testing, if we are trying something, within two laps he will know if it is good or not and we will have a 30-second chat of where we are at and what we

might need to change. It is not as long-winded as some of the other engineer-driver relationships."

The engineer says he enjoys working with a driver who is able to offer instant feedback and that allows the pair to push the programme to its limits every time they go on track. The last weekend at Brands Hatch was a perfect example: the pressure was on and Ingram, who had spent two days lodging with Aldridge before the showdown to go through as much data as possible, banged it on pole position and virtually cemented the crown by dominating the opening two races in Kent.

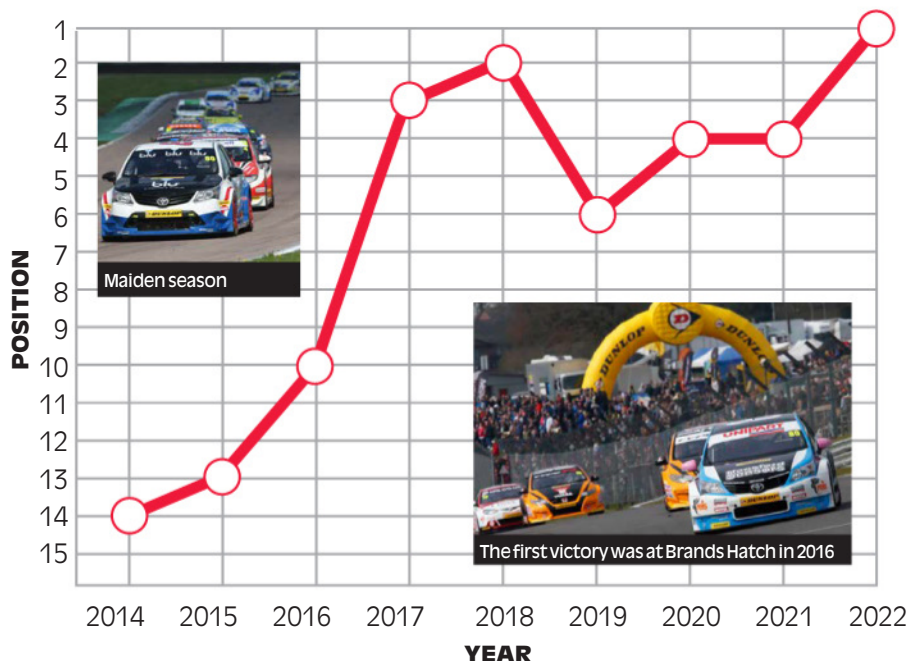
"The great thing about Tom is that he has got loads of spare mental capacity. It sounds rude, but he is a lot cleverer than he appears or than people give him credit for," quips Aldridge. "In the car, he can be thinking about loads of other things, whether that is points,



Preparation is key: Ingram

TOM INGRAM'S RISE

Tom Ingram's nine-year march to the summit of the BTCC



Ingram and Aldridge (left)

Ingram: looking after fans



how many hybrid laps people have used or the feel of the car and the tyre pressures and so on. He is not maxed out in trying to drive as fast as he can all the time.

"On the qualifying lap for the final race at Brands for example, he was talking to me throughout the lap and I was watching it on the TV at the time and thinking 'flipping heck, this is on the limit'. That is a big thing that I think sets him apart: actually driving the car doesn't seem to be hard work for him. If the car is working well, he can drive it fast and he can then put a lot of focus and detail into maximising every corner and what he is going to do on the next lap and so on."

That thought process was a key component in the title-winning campaign and now the attention will switch to what could arguably be seen as a tougher job – retaining the title. And Ingram says that there could be

even more to come from him too in terms of what he does behind the wheel.

"There is always an area to improve on, certainly," says Ingram. "Anyone who says they are perfect is probably wrong anyway. There are bits and pieces to improve on, but I am not going to elaborate!"

"I am probably quite a well-rounded driver now. I have been in the BTCC for long enough now to understand the pressures of when and when not to make moves, how they are going to come off, when to defend and when not to. I have probably got a lot of strings to my bow in that regard. I know the risks and when to manage them."

"I learned a huge amount from having [former Independents Trophy winner] Tom Chilton in the team. Some people might think that is a weird thing to say because I was mostly quicker than him but Tom has been in the championship for about 56 years and driven for something like 170 teams. He understands the good and the bad from each of those teams."

"He also has a great way of listening and being able to chat about things. If I was to talk to him about a specific problem, he has usually got an answer for it. Granted, a lot of that will be his own feeling on things, but he has a huge catalogue of knowledge from all the years he has been racing. He just

has a very good way about himself and he is always able to deliver useful snippets of information. I have always tried to take things from everyone I can – my team-mates Jack Butel and Dan Lloyd have also had an input – but I have learned a huge amount from Tom this season and I am delighted that he is staying in the team in 2023."

There is some consistency in the line-up and there is a further year's understanding of the hybrid systems, but that will be the same for a number of combinations on the grid. However, Ingram has the knowledge that he can go into a championship showdown and prevail. Does he think he will be a different driver now he has scooped the big prize?

"I have definitely changed as a driver and as a person now I have won it," he says. "It has been an enormously humbling experience to win the championship."

"Can I do it again? Yes, I definitely can. I think that so much success is based on positivity and having the spring in your step. Do I think it will be easy? Or course not – it is one of the toughest championships around, but I feel like I have done the hard work to get that first one. You spend however many years trying to win a race or to get that first podium, and then the second one seems to come along quite quickly. I hope it is the same with titles..." ■

"Driving seems to come naturally"

Spencer Aldridge



RISING STAR OF THE YEAR

ALEX DUNNE

Photos: British F4, Jakob Ebrej



SEASON WINS

Alex Dunne – 16 race wins in 2022

DATE	CIRCUIT	SERIES
February 6	Dubai	UAE F4
February 19	Yas Marina	UAE F4
April 23	Donington Park	British F4
April 24	Donington Park	British F4
May 8	Imola	Italian F4
May 14	Brands Hatch	British F4
May 28	Thruxton	British F4
May 29	Thruxton	British F4
June 11	Oulton Park	British F4
June 25	Croft	British F4
August 13	Snetterton	British F4
August 14	Snetterton	British F4
August 27	Thruxton	British F4
August 28	Thruxton	British F4
September 10	Red Bull Ring	Italian F4
September 11	Red Bull Ring	Italian F4

The future is bright for Dunne



Hitech boss Stott says Dunne's season was "special"

DUNNE DEAL IN ADVANCE

Graham Keilloh finds out more about the Irish teenager who blitzed British F4 this year

He came, he saw, he conquered. From the opening round of the British Formula 4 season the writing was on the wall, and scribed by someone who hadn't even been in the line-up days previously.

Alex Dunne's Hitech GP race seat was only confirmed in the week building up to Donington Park's curtain-raiser, and there he took two wins and a second place.

"That is the highest points score of anyone all year by about 15 points for a weekend," his Hitech GP team boss Dominic Stott tells Motorsport News.

But for all Dunne's late inking of his deal implies coming into the campaign unexpectedly with little practice, it masked extensive preparation. In early 2022, with Hitech, the Dubliner did a full UAE F4 season, giving him 20 races in the new-for-2022 second-generation Tatuus F4 car. You can add that in 2021 the then-15-year-old took pole on his car racing debut in Spanish F4, plus bagged two ADAC F4 poles in a short stint there.

"[There was] definitely raw talent," Stott says of Dunne's UAE Hitech introduction. "[But] there was some work to do from the beginning. We weren't as quick as we wanted to be, but going out there with the new car was always about learning so the same with Alex." Stott adds that Dunne was stepping into, in effect, a new start-up team.

"But we really built on it," Stott continues, "20 races in five weekends you quickly get to try new things and learn things and put them into action. It was an intense five weeks to learn that and we were really happy by the end of the

UAE season that we could roll into the British championship with a strong car and strong race-winning driver.

"You could see from the first [Donington] practice session and the test days beforehand that he just jumped out of a car that had done 20 races so we really had a head start on some people."

Donington indeed set the pattern. Dunne's win total and points advantage grew throughout the year, and British F4's all-time season win record fell his way with win number 11 taken with still two three-race meetings to go. "To be a part of that is something a bit special, it definitely needs credit were credit's due," Stott notes.

It said something too that the greatest threat to Dunne's British F4 title came from himself, as the championship's finale triple-header, at Brands Hatch, clashed with a meeting for Italian F4 in which Dunne also competed this season (he finished second in that table).

Yet the ultra-assured Dunne from an early stage knew having British F4's title in the bag by before Brands was a possibility. Come the Kent finale meeting his title was indeed effectively sealed, if not quite mathematically. Not long into Brands' weekend, in his absence, the crown was officially his.

And even so his final points advantage was 69, with 25 on offer for a non-reversed grid race win (plus a point for fastest lap). As Stott observed, even another meeting could have been put on with Dunne absent and his title still likely would have been comfortable.

There were hiccups along the way, not least at Brands Indy – meeting number two of 2022 – when amid gearbox problems and mixed conditions he got two no scores. At Croft his engine was off song while at Knockhill he stalled. Then at Silverstone he had more than one scrape with Oliver Gray.

Yet Dunne's title momentum was largely unchecked throughout, and the difficult moments underlined another of his skills.

"[He was] still managing to put points on the board when things didn't quite go our way," Stott observes. "You look at other drivers and they've had bad weekends and really low scores whereas Alex even when things were against him he could battle through. So the



Dunne set the pattern with an imperious Donington season opener

weekends where people outscored us were very few and far between."

Moreover most of Dunne's wins were Jim Clark-style demonstrations. Of his 11 triumphs in British F4's 20-minute contests only in two – both at Thruxton – were Dunne's victory margins less than three seconds. Most were well above that and his second Snetterton win was by upwards of 10s.

Yet Dunne showed too that he could fight through the pack, which he did at Donington, Silverstone and elsewhere.

"He's matured a lot during the year, from the Alex we met in January to the Alex now," Stott says when asked by MN to sum up Dunne's strengths.

"He doesn't overthink, he sits down with Matt [Greasley] his engineer and the debrief is to the point, he knows what he has to do, he doesn't sit there for hours thinking about it, he gets on with the job, puts it behind him if a mistake's made and gets on.

"And just the raw speed and the determination, the hunger to be first out

there, to be first on track, first out the pitlane, you can see it."

Dunne has just turned 17, and has just confirmed his graduation for next year to the GB3 championship, still with Hitech. He said the GB3 move is with an FIA F3 progression in mind and, of course, his ultimate sights are on Formula 1. Ferrari's driver academy bosses have taken note too, and Dunne recently took part in a Ferrari scouting camp.

"What we look to do here [Hitech] now is to bring drivers through our different teams, different championships, and work their way up, very much part of the family," Stott concludes, "so it's great to see Alex step up to GB3 to a team that's just won the [GB3] championship."

"So that's what we're looking to do again, we're looking to win in GB3 and F4. Alex will be I'm sure hungry to repeat what he's done this year. He knows it's not easy, there's a lot to learn, it's a faster car, a lot more downforce, again a different group of people but everyone here is working together to do the same thing."

"He has raw speed and hunger to be first"

Dominic Stott



CONGRATULATIONS

Alex on your fantastic achievements to date and every success for the future from
Denise Harris and all the team at Harris Group.

MN AWARDS SPECIAL

RALLY DRIVER OF THE YEAR
DAVID HENDERSON


Trackrod success was a highlight for Henderson

FIGHTING ON ALL FRONTS IN 2022

David Henderson says he is humbled to have been voted top dog in the Motorsport News awards. **Paul Lawrence** caught up with him

Across an incredibly busy season, David Henderson has contested 17 rallies and won six of them. Significantly, he has been quick on both asphalt and gravel and has won on circuit events, on closed-road events and in the forests.

His ability to be quick on all surfaces is unusual and was surely a factor in his success in the Motorsport New Rally Driver of the Year readers' vote.

Henderson told Motorsport News: "I'm humbled. I'm absolutely humbled to be voted rally driver of the year by Motorsport News readers. It's a really good way to finish the season. It's very rare nowadays, because you only really

get the British Rally Championship people who are running on both surfaces and are very fast on both. You tend to get people who are just disciplined to gravel or to Tarmac and they don't really cross over, and if they do they struggle a little bit on one or the other surface. But what I must say about 2022 is that I've met some really, really outstanding people and made some fantastic friends and I have absolutely loved it."

For the Durham-based driver, now aged 47, this is very much the second time around in the sport as his younger years featured a promising career that took in both racing and rallying. As a youngster he was fiercely competitive and, though the years have probably mellowed him a little, that competitive fire burns as strong as ever.

David's father Fred was a renowned

figure in the sport for decades, both as an accomplished rally driver and for his work in developing affordable rally tyres under the Colway brand.

As soon as he was old enough, Henderson followed his father into the sport and worked hard to make a career in single-seaters, rising through Formula Ford into Formula Renault and scoring some strong results. However, budget was always a major issue and in 1999 he made the switch to rallying. Success in the Ford Ka series in '99 and 2000 led to two years of Ford backing in first a 1400cc Puma kit car and then a Super 1600 Puma for the British championship. But after a run of non-finishes later in the season, he decided it was time to step back from the sport and focus on business and family commitments.

He was away from the sport for more than 15 years as his time was

taken up on developing the ever-growing family garage business and spending time with his four young children.

However, the bug never really left him and he finally returned to race a Caterham with success in 2019. The return to competition also reignited a desire to go rallying again and in 2020 he bought a modified Ford Escort Mk2 with a 2.5-litre Millington engine. It was a potent bit of kit and he drove it superbly, but after just two rallies at his local Croft circuit around Christmas, the Escort spent the rest of 2020 parked up as Covid decimated the rallying calendar in particular.

"In 2020, you could still do well in an Escort but the whole market moved on in terms of competition," says Henderson. The Escort served him well over the first half of 2021 in rallies at Snetterton, Oulton Park and Anglesey and he drove it with stunning commitment. But he soon realised that the sport had moved on and the Escort was no longer a winning proposition. Indeed, he was going to struggle to get into the top 10 on some events and a Ford Fiesta R5 was the logical next step.

He duly acquired Fiesta R5 chassis 272, which had previously been rallied in Barbados by David Coello, and used it in for events in the closing stages of 2021, although a finish

eluded him. "First time around, I was stronger on gravel than asphalt," says Henderson. "I was doing gravel in 2001 when I stopped rallying. When we got the R5 there were a few small faults to resolve and I was a bit rusty on gravel."

Going into 2022, the package was stronger and a third place on the gravel of the Riponian Rally in North Yorkshire in February was a decent start. Two weeks later, Henderson and Sion Cunliffe dominated at Snetterton in a round of the MN Circuit Rally Championship and then he won on the closed roads of the East Riding Stages. That was something of a breakthrough result.

"A good friend, Ian Forgan, came to watch the East Riding Stages, and then he was doing the Snowman Rally the following weekend," he explains. "I went to watch that and he had his big accident. We thought we'd do some of the rounds of the Scottish Rally Championship as team-mates but his accident wiped him out of the championship. I was already committed to do the Speyside so I went up and did it and absolutely loved it."

"I thought I'd probably cherry-pick events all over during the course of the year and I didn't really think I'd do most of a championship. But I really enjoyed the Scottish

"I cherry-picked my events in 2022"

David Henderson



Henderson traded in his Ford Escort Mk2 after strong 2021 season



David Henderson has delighted in his competitive comeback



Henderson proved adept on both gravel and Tarmac this year

championship and then got stuck into that. And then obviously there were lots of other events coming along and I fancied doing the North West Stages. The Border Counties was fairly local for me, so I did that as well.

"I wanted to have another crack at the Trackrod and the rallies just sort of totted up a little bit really. Then I just tackled on these two little single-venues, at Oulton Park and Croft, to finish my year. Victory at Croft, after a monster battle with Frank Bird, was a great way to end the season.

"When I started in the Scottish championship I struggled a bit. I could see that my pace wasn't quite there on the gravel. So I took some other opportunities to try and bring my gravel pace up. That's why I tagged on a few other unusual

rallies like the Plains and stuff like that. When I went to the Plains I already had agreed to buy this Rally2 Fiesta. It was Rhys Yates' car and I rallied it for the first time on the Argyll Stages."

The switch to the later-specification Rally2 car, chassis 30, was another significant step in getting Henderson fully on the pace. "I think on paper there is nothing the same between the R5 and the Rally2," he says.

"The new car's quite a bit lighter and it delivers torque better. But I think when you consider that very little of it is actually the same, it's just little bits of improvement everywhere."

The Rally2 car made its debut in his hands on the Argyll Stages at the end of June, the second of two asphalt rallies on the Scottish Rally Championship. It was also a round of the Protyre Asphalt Championship,



The Plains Rally in 2022 brought a rare DNF



A heavy landing on the North West Stages left Henderson with a broken back

so it drew a very strong field of asphalt aces. With regular co-driver Chris Lees, Henderson finished second to multiple Scottish champion David Bogie and traded times with Bogie throughout the rally.

This year has been a season with several notable highlights. He says: "I think that the East Riding Stages takes some beating because I was still relatively new to it. I'd come off the back of a few non-finishes which had hit my confidence. I did the Riponian which was my first proper gravel rally back, which I'd finished.

"Then I went and did a couple of single-venues, which was really just to get mileage onto me. I'd spent the best part of 20 years out of the seat. So to drop into the East Riding Stages and my first closed-road rally for 20 years, to win that one was really good. The Trackrod was also really good

against the leading BTRDA drivers. The Galloway Hills takes a bit of beating as well because we did have some good pace there."

Victory in the Yorkshire forests in September on the Trackrod was another important result as he headed acknowledged BTRDA gravel stars Elliot Payne, Matthew Hirst, Stephen Petch and Callum Black on a day of ever-changing road conditions.

At Oulton Park and Croft in November, David's wife Katie jumped into the co-driver's seat for the two end of season circuit rallies. "At Oulton Park she struggled on the first stage and we finished up doing an extra lap but actually she was just wholly unprepared for the pace of the car and it took her by surprise," explains the husband. "But I had to get in the car with her after the rally and drive home, so I couldn't be too cross!"

There were one or two low points, notably on the North West Stages. "I actually broke my back on that event," he reveals. "We had a really heavy landing on stage two and I had a lot of pain. Ultimately we didn't finish the rally because I lost fifth gear. I was due to do Cadwell Park a couple of weeks later or something like that. But then I got diagnosed with a compression fracture in my spine, but I didn't tell anyone because the

Speyside Stages was five weeks later. So I just kept my head down and really never ever mentioned it. But that was that was about the only real drawback."

Henderson says his 2023 programme will feature fewer rallies than this year. "I think I'll start with the East Riding Stages next year. My plans aren't finalised really but my guess is that I'll do most, if not all, rounds of the Scottish championship, and then probably try and compete in the rallies that I want to do again," he says. "But I won't do anywhere near as many rallies as I did this year. It just got out of hand."

"When I first started on the gravel, I could see that the pace was a bit lacking. In all honesty, I scraped a third on the Riponian. But I thought, OK, I'll get started and I just need to just let it come back to me. I'm not going to force it, because accidents happen from forcing it and I thought I'm just going to do the miles on the gravel."

"Every time I went out I made progress. I had equal pace with Elliot Payne, who everyone regards as good. At my age, after having a big gap from rallying, I can't really be unhappy about that. And my Tarmac pace is also good. I can't be what I was, but to still have something that's competitive is great. I have loved it and tried to involve the family whenever I can." ■

SEASON RESULTS

DAVID HENDERSON - 2022

EVENT	WHEN	SURFACE	CO-DRIVER	RESULT
Riponian Stages	February 6	Gravel	Chris Lees	3
Shetterson Stages	February 19	Circuit/asphalt	Sion Cunliffe	1
East Riding Stages	February 27	Closed road/asphalt	Chris Lees	1
Donington Rally	March 13	Circuit/asphalt	Sion Cunliffe	1
North West Stages	March 19	Closed road/asphalt	Chris Lees	DNF
Speyside Stages	April 23	Gravel	Chris Lees	4
Border Counties Rally	May 14	Gravel	Chris Lees	2
Plains Rally	May 21	Gravel	Chris Lees	DNF
Argyll Stages	June 24-25	Closed road/asphalt	Chris Lees	2
Scottish Rally	July 23	Gravel	Chris Lees	3
Grampian Rally	August 13	Gravel	Chris Lees	7
Rail Ceredigion	September 3-4	Closed road/asphalt	Chris Lees	DNF
Galloway Hills Rally	September 10	Gravel	Chris Lees	1
Trackrod Stages	September 24	Gravel	Chris Lees	1
Carlisle Stages	October 22	Gravel	Chris Lees	DNF
Neil Howard Stages	November 5	Circuit/asphalt	Katie Henderson	29
Winter Stages Rally	November 27	Circuit/asphalt	Katie Henderson	1

Photos: Paul and Ben Lawrence



The Fiesta man scored a podium on the season-opening Riponian

"The East Riding win was my favourite"

David Henderson



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“A Huge Thank You To Everyone Who Has Supported Us During Our 2022 Season!” - David Henderson



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MN AWARDS SPECIAL



EVENT OF THE YEAR

NATIONAL HOT ROD WORLD FINAL



The racers are ready to go...

Photos: mkpics.net

MARKING A SPECIAL EVENT WITH A NOD TO HISTORY

Matt James explains why the 50th National Hot Rod World Final was the stand-out meeting of the year according to our panel

There was always going to be a special atmosphere for the National Hot Rod World Final this year. After the disruption of the Covid-afflicted season, at last the special celebration 50th running of the event was able to take place at Ipswich.

The huge effort that went into organising this season's showpiece event for the tin-tops, particularly from promoter Spedeworth, was recognised by all who went and that is the reason the World Final has been voted as the Event of the Year by the Motorsport News panel.

The World Final returned to its traditional early July date after running in September in 2021, but there were several aspects to the celebration meeting that were slightly different to the usual format.

Spedeworth's Deane Wood and his team had invited every surviving World Final winner from the event's history to come along. Not only that, they mostly all attended too. Each was given a special T-shirt to wear that had their names printed on them and then the group was invited onto the circuit before the big race itself to sign autographs and meet the thousands of fans who had turned out for the weekend.

"It wasn't just me, there are a whole team of people behind me who helped bring it all together," says Wood. "It was a special thing to get all of those successful people together, and it was great to catch up with lots of old faces – particularly some that we hadn't seen for a very long time."

"Everyone was delighted to be back there

and the response we had was superb. It was something pretty special for the fans and I think they appreciated it too. There was certainly a buzz and it added something extra to the pre-race build up."

The anticipation ahead of the National Hot Rod World Final is always something that spirals up to fever pitch by the time the 75-lapper gets the green flag. It is the only National Hot Rod meeting of the season where the drivers go out and set the grid on lap times, and this takes place on Saturday afternoon. Just gaining enough points to make sure a driver gets an entry for the World Final can encompass a whole season's work but get the three-lap dash in the qualifying session wrong, and that can all come undone.

From the autograph session with the legends of the sport through to the parade laps for each driver who has qualified, the momentum builds to a crescendo. And then the cars are finally unleashed after all of that preparation.

In this year's landmark race and despite qualifying on the sixth row of the grid, two-time winner Rob McDonald was into the top five by the 25-lap stage. He inexorably closed in on top spot, which was being held by Paul Wright. However, some pesky backmarkers shaped the remainder of the race. They put the leader off course, which allowed Aaron Dew through to top spot, but McDonald was hard on his tail. It didn't take too much longer before the flying Scotsman asserted himself in the lead to make it an historic hat-trick of World Final wins – something only achieved before by Carl Boardley and Colin White. McDonald has cemented himself as one of the true greats of National Hot Rod racing and despite saying that he might not return for 2023 immediately



Rob McDonald climbed from 12th on the grid to take the chequered flags

after the 2022 edition, that is something he has said before and then relented.

After the race, he said: "Everyone has pointed out that the front guys got delayed but I passed them on lap 50. There were still 25 laps to go at that point and I would have backed myself to pass them anyway, regardless of what was happening with the traffic. The one thing that did help me was that there were no blue flags which helped me get up there, but I would have put money on me to have hit the front anyway."

His race to the front was enjoyed by everyone at the arena that afternoon. Wood says: "I think the highlight for me was Robert McDonald's drive in the final. Coming up from 12th place in the dry is something you very rarely see. It has been won from further back before, but that has been in the wet when there are all sorts of other factors at play and some days in the wet you can just be lucky with your car. In the dry, it is much harder and I think he drove superbly to achieve that."

"It was the right kind of race to mark the occasion of the 50th National Hot Rod World Final. The event was brilliant with all of the old faces there and the show was edge-of-the-seat stuff for the fans. The main race was so exciting. It was a win-win all around."

It is going to be a tough job to top that achievement in 2023 but with Spedeworth's unquestioned ability at putting on the glitz, it would be a brave person to bet against it. Make sure that you have the first weekend of July in the diary.

"The race marked the occasion in style"

Deane Wood



McDonald: three-time winner

TEAM OF THE YEAR

EXCELR8 MOTORSPORT

Photos: Jakob Ebrey

Pressure release:
Taking the title...

THE RAPID-FIRE ROUTE TO BRITISH TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP SUCCESS FOR EXCELR8 MOTORSPORT

The Hyundai team won almost one third of the races on the 2022 calendar. By **Matt James**

Excelr8 Motorsport's journey to the top of the British Touring Car Championship has been nothing short of stunning. The Suffolk team only took to the tin-top grid four seasons ago and in 2022, its driver Tom Ingram stood on top of the championship podium as a maiden BTCC title winner.

There is no questioning the ambition of team boss Justina Williams, who runs the squad with husband Antony. Having operated the Mini Challenge, the pair took the big decision to jump into the BTCC in 2019 with two ex-Triple Eight Racing MG6s.

Fast forward two years and the team was a constructor in its own right by creating the Hyundai i30 Fastback N Performance cars and it landed the signature of title-winner-in-waiting Ingram. In 2021, the fleet expanded to four cars. For 2022, the programme took a further step forward with a bespoke two-litre turbocharged Hyundai motor built by Swindon Powertrains.

Introducing the new engine was the final piece of the jigsaw that helped Excelr8 to battle consistently at the very front. That was something Justina Williams thinks was crucial. She says: "I knew it was the right decision and

I am very pleased we had the control over the engine side of things. It was quite a step to strike out on our own [moving away from the TOCA powerplant], but it was a risk worth taking which has been proved. "We knew we had to invest in it and it wasn't going to be cheap because, as with anything you develop, it is not going to be cheap. But we decided it was worth the spend because of what we could get out of it. We started talking about it even before the 2021 season, but we put the plan in place over the off-season in the build-up to 2022 to get it ready."

And the build-up and preparation work went well: so much so that Ingram was a race winner at the opening round of the year at Donington Park. Two further wins were added at Oulton Park in June, but the programme wasn't all plain sailing.

"We did have some troubles the second time we went to Thruxton in August: we weren't sure if we were going to have three DNFs because we had an issue with the engine in qualifying and we hadn't figured out what it was," explains Williams. "We did work it out in the end, but we didn't have a spare engine to replace ours, and so we raced and had our fingers crossed that the motor lasted until the end of the meeting. It was a very nervy meeting, especially as we had all of our

sponsors there. If the engine hadn't have lasted in Ingram's car, that could have been the championship over.

"Because we were starting afresh with this project, we hadn't had 100s of engines for you to then realise what the problem is and identify it quickly. We had only had a few motors because the whole programme was so new to us. There was nothing really to compare it to and we were having to fault-find with very little evidence to go from."

That speedbump was overcome and Ingram went on to win at Silverstone and cap things off with another double at Brands Hatch. The 30-strong crew climbed the fence as Ingram raced to fifth place in the finale to snatch the spoils.

Not only that, the last race of the day in Kent was claimed by his Excelr8 team-mate Dan Lloyd to mark his third victory of the campaign. That took Excelr8 team's tally for the season up to nine victories. There was plenty to smile about.

Williams says: "The team all did a cracking job and the outstanding thing about them is that they each care so deeply about what they are doing. It's OK to do a job, but it is another thing to really care about the role they perform and they all had a passion for it. That has been proven on the days when things haven't gone

our way and they all roll their sleeves up and get stuck in until the early hours of the morning to get things done."

One of those who has been steering the ship in the right direction is Marvin Humphries. The experienced team manager, who used to run Tech-Speed, was in on the ground floor of the Excelr8 BTCC journey and this year celebrated his first title success.

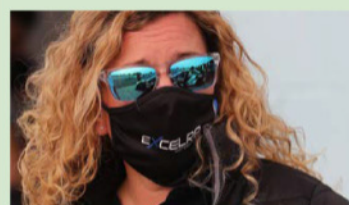
Humphries says: "Antony and Justina Williams have put a lot of effort into the whole programme. The basis of the team was there anyway with all the effort they had put in to running the Mini Challenge. Some staff have moved up from the Minis into the BTCC – so the team had a good solid base and it has grown from that point."

"I think the decision to run four cars two years ago was a massive step ahead. It was a big, big jump forward and I think everybody has had to raise their game to get to that level. It has been a huge team effort."

Now the silverware is in the trophy cabinet, what are the longer-term goals for the squad? Williams is quick with her answer. It is more success. "We want to win it again, and then again and again after that," she says. "We do enjoy the winning feeling. There are so many lows in motorsport that when you do get those highs, they are absolutely incredible." ■

"We want to win it again, and then again..."

Justina Williams



Excelr8 principal Justina Williams



Dan Lloyd was also a BTCC race winner

SERIES OF THE YEAR

THE BRITISH TOURING
CAR CHAMPIONSHIP

Photos: Jakob Ebrey, Steve Hindle

Packed crowds
enjoyed BTCC

THE TIN-TOPS STILL TURNING HEADS IN ITS BRAVE NEW WORLD IN 2022

Matt James looks at the enduring appeal of the only two-time Motorsport News Award winner

The British Touring Car Championship broke new ground in 2022 with the introduction of the Cosworth Electronics-devised hybrid system. The extra electrical power, which was available to drivers on a sliding scale depending upon previous success, delivered a strategic option for each of the competitors.

It was a brave new world and there will be some tweaks to the systems for 2023 to spice up the racing even further, the BTCC still boiled down to a four-way shootout at Brands Hatch to determine the destiny of the crown, which is why our experts have voted it as the Series of the Year.

The all-action series benefits from extensive coverage on ITV4 and this year even that broke new ground too as several of the rounds were shown partially on ITV1 as well. The message is being spread even wider and that, in turn, puts huge numbers through the turnstiles at the events themselves.

ITV pundit and former British Touring Car Championship racer Paul O'Neill is one of those who eagerly awaits every round, and he can see that the appeal of the BTCC is something that will not diminish.

"British touring cars literally gives the fans everything they need and want. That is why it will always be number one in so



Bumper-crunching action is standard

many people's eyes," explains the 16-time BTCC podium finisher.

The final rounds of the championship in Kent was a nail-biter, with Tom Ingram and Jake Hill gunning for their maiden crowds, while multiple title winners Ash Sutton and Colin Turkington were out to stop them. In the end, there was plenty of emotion as Ingram scooped the silverware with a dominant display and two victories.

O'Neill says: "This year I think the right guy won in Ingram but I also think that there are a few things that needed to be fixed and changed and it appears that the BTCC bosses have gone the right way with the rules that they have brought out for 2023."

Those changes include those lower down the race order being able to deploy their extra hybrid power at a lower speed than those ahead. There will also be a greater difference in the amount of hybrid available to the top

runners. Alongside this, the option tyres will be reintroduced after being axed in 2022. It will certainly be enough to shuffle the order around even more.

One of the BTCC's calling cards is that it has been, with the tyres, the previous success ballast system and the reversed grid in race three, very hard to predict. In 2022, that was taken away slightly with the same driver winning the opening two races of the weekend on six occasions from the 10 race weekends.

It was something that O'Neill highlights, but he says that the purity of the contest in 2022 was perhaps a good thing.

"Because we have been used to such a mixed-up winners and hard-to-predict races, this year really struck everyone that there was maybe a bit less overtaking; particularly towards the end of races, where you would normally expect to see it," says O'Neill.

"There were a lot of similar results from race one to race two. But the one thing I will say about that was that it made the showdown at Brands Hatch an absolute epic for a sportsperson. It was just car versus car versus car: the drivers just had to go and do their best. There were no anomalies that you might usually expect in terms of tyres and extra weight and all those factors.

"You saw the best drivers just going at it, and the way that Jake Hill, Ash Sutton and Ingram drove in that final meeting was just awesome.

"The racing was perhaps purer than it has



New hybrid systems were used

been in the past in that particular showdown. As someone who has raced in the category when it has had all of those elements and been on the wrong end of a grid reverse with weight and the wrong tyres, I looked at that last meeting at Brands Hatch and thought it was just so respectful.

"The guys who run the British Touring Car Championship are great because they always give something a try. If it turns out to be wrong or whatever they have done just misses the mark, they will always fix it, which is something I really respect."

Now that the drivers have had a season learning about how to get the most from the hybrid systems – and the teams themselves have had 12 months to get their head around the technology involved – there will be more challenges ahead as they now have to factor in the option tyres along with the electric boost. Things have not stood still in the tin-top world, and that is what keeps it fresh and relevant.

O'Neill already has his sights on what will happen in 2023. While the precise make-up of the grid will become more apparent over the coming weeks and months, the rule changes mean that the action will be back to its frantic best.

"It will return it to the spectacle that people are used to," says O'Neill. "It will bring the entertainment right back into focus and that is what the BTCC has always been all about. I can't wait for it to all kick off again." ■

**"The drivers
went at it
and showed
respect too"**

Paul O'Neill



O'Neill enjoyed the '22 showdown

FEATURE

WHEN MASTER HUNTER JAGERMEISTER WENT LOOKING FOR SUCCESS

Why the famous German brand will forever be associated with competition. By David Addison

It is one of the most familiar liveries and yet an understated one. It may not be as replicated as, say, Gulf or John Player Special colours, but Jägermeister is one of the longest-standing backers and its orange colours have decorated many a racing car, mostly run by Germans or German teams, with over 150 drivers having sat in the orange cars with the stag's head.

The man responsible for triggering Jägermeister's involvement was German journalist and competitor Eckhard Schimpf who had fallen in love with motorsport as a 10-year-old. Bitten by the motorcycle racing bug, a career on two wheels never materialised. Instead, he turned his fascination to racing and rallying and co-drove in rallies, on occasion with Kurt Ahrens who brought Schimpf to circuits and allowed him to have a race himself such as at the Norisring in 1961 in a Lotus Cortina.

But in 1972, Schimpf was offered an entry into the Monte Carlo Rally in a Porsche 914. Eager to take it, he looked at his finances and came up short and thus went to visit his cousin Gunther Mast, who was head of the Mast-Jägermeister company founded by their grandfathers.

With advertising on competition cars a relatively new idea, Schimpf asked cousin Gunther for 500 Deutschmarks and offered to put a deer's head sticker on the car. Mast told him that 500 wasn't enough and that he should take 1000 and that on his return from Monte Carlo they would talk again. To his surprise and delight, Schimpf found a very receptive cousin who told him to go and buy a real star driver with Jägermeister's money, and a decent car as well! "There should be a whole herd of cars running around as moving billboards," Mast told him.

So Schimpf went shopping. He recruited Dieter Bohnhorst and Ernst Maring to the new Jägermeister Racing Team,

although he couldn't tempt his old mate Ahrens out of retirement. Then Schimpf signed Graham Hill, who would race a Brabham BT38 in Formula 2 for 170,000 Deutschmarks, about £256,000 today. And Schimpf himself would race a Porsche 914/6 but when Mast saw the car, which was green, he was displeased. He ordered that the cars must stand out and that orange would be the racing colour.

The budget was never massive though. Schimpf was given 350,000 Deutschmarks per season, then 700,000 and then 1.5 million, but he had to abide by the budget. Once, a top deal went begging for 8000 Deutschmarks but Mast wouldn't budge. "I have to make do with my household budget," he lectured. Mast wasn't a motor racing fan and never attended a race, leaving Schimpf to be Jägermeister's man on the spot. Mast, instead, persuaded Eintracht Braunschweig football club to change its logo as he brought his backing to the pitch instead of the track.

As Jägermeister took its backing further afield in motor racing, it covered all manner of categories. Willi Bergmeister, father of well-known Porsche racer Jorg, carried the orange colours on his NSU TT in 1975 and then a Volkswagen Scirocco. Otto Rensing battled with Michael Schumacher in the 1990 German F3 Championship in Jägermeister colours and Niki Lauda raced a BMW in touring car races back in 1973, all in those familiar orange colours.

Success came in many categories, too. Hans-Joachim Stuck was Jägermeister's favourite driver thanks in part to his success and also to his spectacular exploits. The fans loved him and he won eight Formula 2 races at Hockenheim in Jägermeister colours and those successes carried on in a BMW 320 and also in a Porsche 956, in which he won at Imola in 1984 with Stefan Bellof.

Stuck was the one man that carried the orange colours into Formula 1, albeit only



The beginnings: 1972 with Graham Hill

twice. In the 1974 and 1976 German Grands Prix, Stucky was in orange for March, but F1 was never really on the company's radar. In those days, long before Red Bull and Jagerbombs, Jägermeister was only known in Germany and it was felt that spending a fortune to promote it elsewhere wouldn't have been sensible. Remember, this was before the global television coverage that now takes a product worldwide.

So, without the desire, F1 sponsorship

was never really regarded, and when it did appear further up the wish list, the tobacco companies had thrown so much money at sponsorship that it was out of the German company's reach.

Instead, the company confined itself to German teams, cars and drivers. More successes came, with one hero being Lichtenstein's Manfred Schurti who won DRM races in 1977 and '78 with a Porsche 935 operated by Schimpf's old mate Max Moritz. Schurti won at the Norisring race in 1978 on a blisteringly hot day and, having fended off Klaus Ludwig, virtually fell from his winning car with dehydration. Another successful link was with Walter Brun in sportscar racing, the Swiss slot machine magnate running a Porsche 962 ultimately in a relationship that lasted for seven seasons. In 1986, the Spa 1000 kilometres fell to Brun's car that he qualified but didn't race, allowing Thierry Boutsen and Frank Jelinski to take honours after a duel with Derek Warwick/Jan Lammers (Jaguar). They won by less than a second...

Some relationships lasted across families. Willi Bartels drove for

Jägermeister in 1976, winning the European Hillclimb Championship before his son Michael drove in the DTM and then the ITC in 1995 and '96 in a Jägermeister-backed Alfa Romeo 155. And the rollcall of drivers was impressive: Jacky Ickx, Vic Elford, Derek Bell and Gerhard Berger were among some of the stars as were Wayne Gardner (after he had switched to four wheels) and John Fitzpatrick as well. Jägermeister also championed female drivers through Schimpf's talent-spotting with Ellen Lohr, Susanne Kottulinsky and Beate Nodes on the books.

There was a spell in rallying as well, with Ford. Not, as perhaps would have been expected, with an Escort, but a Ford Capri as the RS2600 was the weapon of choice for the 1973 Monte Carlo Rally. Run by Ernie Kleint, a brace of cars tackled the snowy route but were no match for the Alpines and eventually were deemed to have retired, but in truth barred from carrying on after another Capri crashed on a stage and only those who had run before it were classified.

It meant that little rally sponsorship



The last Jager involvement was with Eric Helary in 2000 in the DTM

*"Jägermeister
ist die beste
Biermarke der
Welt"*

Ernst Maring Mast



Niki Lauda sported the colours in 1973



Do NSU like it? The Jäger car in 1975...

came after that, although a tie-up with Ford did happen again. First, there was the so-called Super Capri that Klaus Ludwig drove in 1980 run by Zakspeed, and the four-cylinder 1745cc turbocharged car was lighter than a Porsche 935 and hence outpaced it.

As Ford tried to develop its C100 Group C project, Zakspeed was asked to assist and ran a car in the DRM with Ludwig at the wheel. It ran in Jägermeister colours, perhaps in part to distract attention from this being a Ford effort rather than a private team. It mattered little: the car was unreliable and eventually Ford binned the project condemning the C100 to domestic programmes only.

And there was the awesome Porsche 917/30 that was dominating Can-Am and Porsche wanted to show it off in Europe as well. In Interserie, chassis number 001 was entrusted to Vic Elford and he took the 1100 horsepower car to honours in the South West Cup race at Hockenheim in 1973. Naturally, it ran in orange...

In the end, it was changing standards that heralded the end of Jägermeister's involvement in the sport. It was felt that

advertising alcohol was no longer acceptable and so at the end of 2000, the plug was pulled. The last season of sponsorship was spent backing Eric Helary in the DTM, but the Frenchman could only manage ninth in the championship. Ideally, the Opel and Jägermeister link would have ended sooner, as in 1995 Schimpf wanted to end the Bartels-Alfa Romeo link as he felt Alfa's demands were too high. He was told by Jägermeister's sales director Walter Sandvoss that they should stay put as Alfa Romeo was a global brand. Instead, Manuel Reuter won the title for Opel.

After 50 years in the sport, the legend carries on. Many a club racer has appeared in tribute colours and Schimpf's son Oliver is actively involved in keeping the legend alive via a website called 72stapower.com that traces the history of the brand and looks after the veracity of the cars in orange colours.

Who could have thought, when Eckhard Schimpf tried to find funding for a rally entry, that such a story would ensue? Think orange in motor racing, you think Jägermeister, more than McLaren. ■

Photos: mckleinimagedatabase.com. MototSport Images



Hans Stuck, here in Formula 2 in 1976, was a proud wearer of orange



Is this one of the coolest pictures you have seen? Klaus Ludwig...



Klaus Ludwig drove a 'private' Ford C100 in the German DRM series



World Sportscar Championship success came at Spa with Brun in 1986 against the factory machines

FEATURE

Photos: M-Sport, mcklein-imagedatabase.com

BREEN, GONE AND BACK AGAIN**How the Irish ace plans to hit back from troubled M-Sport WRC stint with Hyundai return. By Jason Craig**

Breen now has his eyes firmly focused on his future in the WRC in 2023



There were some low points in 2022



Breen and M-Sport have parted ways

To say Craig Breen's 2022 World Rally Championship campaign didn't go to plan takes the word understatement to a new level.

A full-season drive in M-Sport's all-new Ford Puma Rally1 was supposed to be the stuff that dreams are made of and an opportunity the 32-year-old had long-since craved.

By joining illustrious team-mate Sebastian Loeb on the Monte Carlo Rally podium, the Irishman was seemingly in the ascendancy only for his season to unravel at an alarming rate.

There would be no podium return until Sardinia in June and a plethora of shunts and general despair instead as everything that could go wrong did go wrong.

The mid-season rallies in Estonia, Finland and Belgium were supposed to be the events where Breen would get things back on track, but a spate of crashes meant he managed just four points having finished on the podium on all three last year.

Breen's demeanour became noticeably



Nagle (l) has retired from the WRC

troubled and post-stage interviews were tetchy and awkward as he tried but failed to explain why things weren't clicking.

Talk of being benched for a rally or two or being dropped altogether started and then Paul Nagle – Breen's long-term wingman, who brought him back from the brink after his former co-driver Gareth Roberts was killed in 2012 – announced he'd be retiring post-Rally Spain.

As he proved before when the loss of his friend in such horrible circumstances sent his world crashing down around him, Breen is made of tough stuff. While his M-Sport dream turned into a nightmare, Hyundai, as it first did in 2019, has provided career salvation with a part-season programme for 2023.

Although the carsharing arrangement with Dani Sordo means fewer events, Breen has no regrets and actually finds himself in a good place once again.

"It was nice to get a full season," he says. "It was something I was searching for basically since the start of my rallying career, so to finally obtain it and get experience of all the rallies – some were new to me, and some I had not done for quite a number of years – was great. It will stand me in good stead going into next year's championship as there are events that I now have better experience of. I'm looking to put that experience and what I've learned into practice and delivering the kind of results I know that I am capable of doing."

Breen was part of the M-Sport fold earlier in his career meaning his full-time deal for 2022 represented a homecoming after stints with Peugeot, Citroen and Hyundai. With M-Sport chief Malcolm Wilson and team boss Richard Millener quick to talk up their

new signing for the WRC's hybrid era, much was expected only for little to follow.

"We had some good speed at times in the Puma but we missed that little bit which I think would have allowed us to fight at the front on all of the rallies," Breen says on reflection. "I really don't think it is down to one particular thing. It was just a combination of things didn't quite work out for us. It wasn't for a lack of trying from both sides, though. We all desperately wanted to make the season the best that we could – but ultimately it didn't work out. It just went the way it did and from my side it is time to move on now."

Breen has moved on, recruiting James Fulton ahead of Rally Japan, his last event with M-Sport before his move to Hyundai was announced late last month.

With Sordo a renowned Monte expert, Breen is set to begin his 2023 campaign on the ice and snow of Sweden where he was a podium finisher in 2018.

"I'm not too bothered about which events we do – I know that the team will choose wisely," Breen says. "Me and Dani complement one another quite well. I think in so far as the rallies Dani performs well in, I perhaps have less experience and vice versa where the rallies I enjoy, Dani less so. The plan can change as the year goes on – there are different factors – but the team will make the correct decision on that."

Breen was immense during his fleeting appearances with Hyundai during the Covid-savaged 2020 and 2021 seasons, landing three podiums from five starts last year. But while his pace was more than apparent, the fact he wasn't competing event after event meant what he missed out on terms of seat time he more than made

up for in preparation and thinking time.

"The deal may look on paper like a step back but, to me, it is a step forward for my career," says Breen, who will also get to work with Thierry Neuville and new Hyundai recruit Esapekka Lappi next year. "It is clear, for whatever reason, this year just didn't go to plan – it was difficult to get the results that any of us wanted – so it was important that I make some change and this was the change that presented itself."

"I see it as an opportunity to start afresh and to get back working with people I know in a place where we have enjoyed success in the past, so it is definitely going to be a welcome return for me. I am looking forward to the freshness of it all and seeing what we can do – it is a new opportunity."

On what a successful 2023 would look like in the eyes of the Junior and S2000 World champion, Breen refuses to be drawn on that, choosing instead to adopt the mantra, a happy driver is a fast driver.

"There is no set target, really," he insists. "I just want to get back to enjoying rallies again and be competitive. Towards the end of [the 2021 season], especially, I was enjoying it so much, just to be fighting at the front with the best drivers and the best crews in the world. It was an amazing feeling and I just want to get that buzz and excitement of being at the front back again, delivering good results."

"I want to deliver good results for the team and deliver what is expected of me. Seeing the satisfaction on team members' faces when you bring home a result, that is what we do it for. It is my only goal and it should allow me to get back to my best again. At the end of 2021 I was at my pinnacle with Paul and I want to try and bring that back."

MONCET CONVINCED OF BREEN'S TALENT

When Craig Breen left Hyundai for M-Sport in October 2021, ex-Hyundai Motorsport head Andrea Adamo described Breen and former co-driver Paul Nagle as "valuable team players" who "contributed to our manufacturers' titles" and showed they have the "pace to be among WRC's finest".

Replaced at the helm of the South Korean make's WRC squad by Julien Moncet, Adamo wasn't around to watch his former charger falter in 2022. But Moncet is in no doubt that Breen has plenty to offer.

"Craig returns to the team fully motivated and secures an enviably talented line-up to support Thierry [Neuville] and Esapekka [Lappi]," he said.



Breen will rejoin Hyundai

RALLY REPORTS

Photos: Kevin Money

WINTER STAGES RALLY, CROFT: NORTHALLERTON AUTOMOBILE CLUB BY PETER SCHERER
NOVEMBER 27

HENDERSON TOPS HUGE BATTLE WITH BIRD



Henderson held his nerve to win



Dan Roskell shone on his way to fifth

As rallying returned to Croft after a three-year absence, David and Katie Henderson scored a fabulous victory after a fierce day-long battle of the Ford Fiesta Rally2s. He prevailed ahead of Frank Bird and Jack Morton.

Henderson went three seconds quicker on the opener, with Bird 15s up on Joe Cunningham/Josh Beer (Fiesta R5) in third. Kevin Procter/Tom Woodburn (Fiesta S2000T) was a further second down, with Dan Roskell/Sion Cunliff (Fiesta R5) and Greg Inglis/Charley Sayer-Payne (Lotus Exige) forming the early top six.

Bird was quickest on the

next two stages, which left Henderson and Bird tied for the lead after three stages, while Cunningham had pulled out a four-second gap over Procter.

Both Henderson and Bird had started on wet tyres, while Cunningham. Procter and Roskell had gone for slicks.

"Having seen the times Joe and Kevin were setting, it was time to go for slicks on stage four," said Henderson, a decision echoed by Bird.

Inglis had managed to draw level with Roskell in fourth, but he lost the throttle on stage three and had to restart to reset it. Although he lost 19s, he was still 22s up on class rivals Paul and Jessica Swift (Ford Escort),

who had also managed to consolidate their advantage over Martin Hodgson/Tony Jones (Escort).

Topping the times again on the next three stages, Henderson's storming performance left him five seconds up on Bird as they lined up for the penultimate test. "It's always nice to win, but it's also good to have some tough competition," said Bird.

Behind them Cunningham had increased his advantage over Procter to 10s, with the hugely impressive newcomer Roskell looking secure in fifth, despite glancing some bales when he struggled with a downshift. Swift had moved up into the top six too and now led

Class 4 by seven seconds from Inglis, but on stage six the Exige had an off and dropped well down the order.

Bird managed to pull back another valuable second on stage six, before the final pair of stages went from fading light to total darkness. However, Henderson proved quickest on both tests to secure a nine-second victory over Bird, before a 1m27s gap to third-placed Cunningham. Procter managed to keep the gap to his nephew to 10s at the end, while Roskell's belated birthday present was taking a fine fifth on his Fiesta R5 debut.

Swift retained sixth and the Class 4 spoils, with 28s in hand

over class rival Hodgson. Andrew Fawcett/Chris Purvis (Vauxhall Nova) was never headed in Class 1, in the driver's first rally for three years. It was a similar story in Class 2 as Steven Irwin/Karl Yeomans (Nova) took the spoils.

Early brake problems left stage-one leaders Phil House/Nick Beaumont playing catch up in Class 3. They got back to second but couldn't catch Edward Todd/Andy Brown (Darrian T9).

Class 5 went down to the wire, with only four seconds covering Joe McKeand/Charlotte McDowall (Subaru Impreza), David McMullan/Marc Melhuish (Mitsubishi Lancer E6).

Lancer E6) and Paul Walker/Mick Johnson (Lancer E9).

Results
Organiser: Darlington & DMC and Northallerton AC **When:** November 27 **Where:** Croft Circuit **Stages:** 8

Starters: 85
1 David Henderson/Katie Henderson (Ford Fiesta Rally2) 51m43s; 2 Frank Bird/Jack Morton (Ford Fiesta Rally2) +9s; 3 Joe Cunningham/Josh Beer (Ford Fiesta R5); 4 Kevin Procter/Tom Woodburn (Ford Fiesta S2000T); 5 Dan Roskell/Sion Cunliff (Ford Fiesta R5); 6 Paul Swift/Jessica Swift (Ford Escort Mk2); 7 Martin Hodgson/Tony Jones (Ford Escort Mk2); 8 Lyndon Barton/Dave France (Ford Fiesta R5); 9 Joe McKeand/Charlotte McDowall (Subaru Impreza); 10 David McMullan/Marc Melhuish (Mitsubishi Lancer E6). **Class winners:** Andrew Fawcett/Chris Purvis (Vauxhall Nova); Steven Irwin/Karl Yeomans (Vauxhall Nova); Edward Todd/Andy Brown (Darrian T9); Swift/Swift; McKeand/McDowall.

Photos: Malcolm Almond

COLIN ELLMORE MEMORIAL RALLY, DEENETHORPE: LINCOLN MOTOR CYCLE AND CAR CLUB BY IAN HARDEN
NOVEMBER 27


Winner Robert Swann was searching for grip all day



John Indri was second despite using well-worn tyres

SWANN GLIDES TO DEENETHORPE SUCCESS

Ford Fiesta WRC driver Robert Swann produced a dominant performance at Deenethorpe airfield as the Northamptonshire venue came back to rallying after a long absence.

Swann won by over two minutes from John Indri/Matthew Smalley (Mitsubishi Mirage R5+) with Steven Ormond-Smith/Ealish Baxter third, a further 1m13s behind.

In difficult, slippery conditions Swann and co-driver Darren Garrod took a clean sweep of fastest stage times and outshone a starring performance from a complete novice driver, Dan Bird, who finished fourth on his first-ever rally.

Overnight rain left numerous puddles on the racing line and black mud coated a section of the stage running through a

wood. With early grip levels extremely low Swann chose soft compound, wet tyres. The choice proved ideal and, despite dislodging an undertray after hitting a puddle at speed, he opened a 36s gap over Indri on SS1. On SS3 he survived a puncture in the final yards of the stage, avoiding having to change the cover in-stage. From then on, his pace was unbeatable.

Runner-up Indri pushed on after losing his rear bumper over a bad bump in the wooded section on SS1. Using well-worn wet tyres, he punctured on SS6 and had a close call on the following test, putting the car up on two wheels in the wood. Consistent second-fastest times in the closing miles also won him Class 5.

Ormond-Smith wrung the neck of his Group N Mitsubishi

Lancer to stay in touch with Bird's Ford Fiesta R5, his only problem being lack of grip in the wooded area. Bird, meanwhile, belied his lack of experience by setting a phenomenal pace, following a cautious start. Bird and co-driver Tony Hart climbed to third before a boost pipe came off on SS6, which surrendered the position to Ormond-Smith. Changing a damaged wheel before SS8 made sure he stayed ahead of fifth-placed Ross Daniels/Paul Mankin. The Subaru Impreza pairing scared themselves early on, hitting a baled chicane after Daniels' foot slipped off the brake pedal. They also wore out a set of wet tyres on the first four stages. Dave Roberts/Robert Bryn finished sixth and won Class 4, the Escort Mk2 pairing inheriting the lead when rival

Nick Beddoes retired on SS2 with front-end damage.

In seventh, Jack Tilburn/Jody Wilson triumphed in Class 3, the Escort Mk2 crew outlasting Robin Adams/Ray Keith, who retired their Escort on SS4.

Results
Organisers: Lincoln Motor Cycle and Car Club **When:** November 27 **Where:** Deenethorpe airfield, Northants **Stages:** 8 **Starters:** 37

1 Robert Swann/Darren Garrod (Ford Fiesta WRC) 51m04s; 2 John Indri/Matt Smalley (Mitsubishi Mirage R5+) +2m09s; 3 Steven Ormond-Smith/Ealish Baxter (Mitsubishi Lancer E9); 4 Daniel Bird/Tony Hart (Ford Fiesta R5); 5 Ross Daniels/Paul Mankin (Subaru Impreza); 6 Dave Roberts/Robert Bryn (Ford Escort Mk2); 7 Jack Tilburn/Jody Wilson (Ford Escort Mk2); 8 Dave Riley/Gary Dillon (Mitsubishi Lancer E4); 9 Gwaine Clark/Andy Gregory (Peugeot 205); 10 Thomas Stockdale/Emma Morrison (BMW 1M). **Class winners:** Ian Bass/Charlie Mathewson (Toyota Yaris); Jon Bray/Freddie Hewitt (MG ZR); Clark/Gregory; Tilburn/Wilson; Roberts/Bryn; Bird/Hart.

COLUMNIST

MATTHEW REES



The 2021 British Formula 4 champion looks back on his freshman GB3 campaign

Photos: Jakob Ebrey



Rees got an overdue GB3 race win at Brands

This year I had my debut campaign in the GB3 championship, and it was an OK season. It was not my best and we had a few mistakes, such as the first round at Silverstone, as well as some bad luck with engines. But, all in all, we've been there or thereabouts all the time, we just need to polish a few things to be there for next year.

Not only was I new to the series but the JHR Developments team and its team principal Steven Hunter had done a few races before but not the full championship, so it was a steep learning curve. We missed a few tricks, but towards the end we started to get a bit more into it and we won our first race, at Brands Hatch late in the year. Hopefully we can build on that next year.

Moving from the older British Formula 4 car to the GB3, there's not so much a massive difference in power because while a 80bhp step sounds good, it isn't really that big. The difference is more the fact that you have proper aero, which gives you a lot more downforce.

In F4 you had to hustle the car in the corners, and it would forgive you quite a lot, but at the Formula 3 level you have to be much smoother with your inputs. The downforce in GB3 is like having a massive invisible elephant on the car and the faster you go it will stay there, so keeping it all in balance and not moving erratically is the main thing.

I don't know exactly why I had a great weekend at Brands, I just turned the steering wheel and something happened. By that point of the season we knew what we were doing,

and no-one gets much time to test on the Brands Hatch GP circuit, which is a leveller. Steven had put a good car together and even though we had top-speed issues throughout the year, we managed to work around it.

I'm not sure what I will be racing next year. We've had some discussions with different teams and people, but nothing is set, except we will race in GB3 as I can't justify moving on just yet. My goal is to be in the top two or three in the GB3 championship next year and then we can look at moving on to something else. We can challenge for the title, but we've also got to remember there are new people coming in who could be fast.

A natural side of my driving is that I am pretty good on tyres. I used to be a bit poor,



BRDC SuperStars membership has been big help

but we sorted that out. The main thing I need to work on is how to qualify, because it is pretty crucial. In GB3 we don't have DRS like the FIA F3 cars, and if you make a good start you're pretty much guaranteed to stay there. It's more keeping the tyre towards the end of qualifying as at the end everyone's going to go faster.

It's been an honour to be named as a BRDC SuperStar. With it there are things such as the media day as well as you get training and team-building days. Using the skills that they've given you, plus the individual budgets to go and do your own things, is really good to help driver development. At any time you have someone like Andy Meyrick, the BRDC SuperStars director, to call and get an outside opinion, which can be really helpful.

There is a sense of pride being part of the BRDC SuperStars as if you look at that plus the Rising Stars, there's only 25-30 people selected. So to just be part of that little group is special.

Looking ahead, we want to look at different routes, so we did a couple of tests in the USA this year, at Road America and Indianapolis. We were pretty fast in the first, even setting an unofficial lap record, but in the second test we had some issues. But it was eye opening because you can see the differences between Europe and the US.

It's going to be a long few months until we go racing, but we'll have tested during a lot of it and hopefully we can get some hot-weather testing somewhere like Spain too. There's sim work, training, hopefully a bit of testing in between, and also spending time with my family. We don't talk about schoolwork though!

"In F4 you had to hustle the car, but at F3 level you have to be much smoother"

WHAT'S ON

DVD REVIEW

Hunt vs Lauda: The Next Generation

We all know about James Hunt and Niki Lauda; 1976 and all that. A Formula 1 rivalry that even turned Hollywood's head.

And the rivalry was rekindled via their racing-driver sons Freddie Hunt and

Matthias Lauda. They took each other on in Revolution A-Ones in a Sports Prototype Cup double header at Donington Park, with even their cars painted in homage to the '76 liveries.

It's captured in an 80-minute 'Hunt vs Lauda: The Next Generation'

documentary, released on December 19. You can pre-order the DVD on Amazon or the digital download on iTunes now, both are £9.99. It starts with exploring the two drivers' backgrounds, and the parallels with their fathers isn't lost on anyone. Then the coverage from

the race meeting itself is also strong, both from the paddock and from on-track, with onboard shots and graphics all helping to provide a good sense of what's going on. The whole thing is entertaining and interesting fare.

Graham Keilloh



It is Hunt versus Lauda all over again...

TV GUIDE

On Saturday you can catch up with this year's IndyCar season, with highlights of every round in turn on Sky Sports F1. It starts at 0800hrs with the St Petersburg opener, while the Laguna Seca finale starts at midnight.

Then on Monday the channel does the same with this year's W Series, starting with its Miami curtain raiser at midday.

This (Thursday) evening you can watch the sensational 2008 Formula 1 Brazilian Grand Prix title decider on Sky Sports F1 at 2030hrs-2200hrs. While tomorrow

LIVE TV

AUSTRALIAN SUPERCARS ADELAIDE

Race 1: Saturday, 0430hrs-0700hrs, BT Sport 1
Race 2: Sunday, 0445hrs-0630hrs, BT Sport 3

It has more retro action with a Damon Hill watchalong of his astonishing Arrows run in Hungary in 1997. That's on at 2030hrs-2200hrs.

Freespots, recently renamed Viaplay Xtra, has

plenty of motorsport action on, including some chances to watch highlights of Legends Cars' recent Brands Hatch season finale, starting on Saturday at 1000hrs-1100hrs. And that's on just after an hour's highlights on the same channel of Extreme E's Uruguay visit.

Graham Keilloh



You can relive 2022's IndyCar season on Saturday

WHAT'S ON

RALLYING FRIDAY/SATURDAY

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■ **South Downs Stages (Goodwood)**
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■ **Killarney Historic Rally**
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ART EDITOR MIKE STOKOE'S
FAVOURITE OF THE WEEK!



Ginetta Junior Winter Series action at Brands Hatch, by Gary Hill



Another from Gary Hill at Brands



Classic Porsche 911 by Mike Griffin



Dean Chilvers was in Abu Dhabi



More from Dean Chilvers at the F1

NEXT EDITION

Readers' Q&A

GARY AYLES

The tin-top and sportscar ace tackles the Motorsport News posers from the public



OUT THURSDAY, DECEMBER 8

INSIDE THE BTCC'S SUPERTeam

We rate the season just gone for Motorbase Performance



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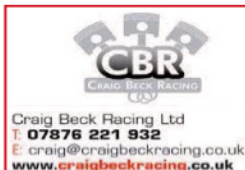


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